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Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5230th meeting

Thursday, 21 July 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Mercado
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mr. Brencick

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 19 July 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2005/469)

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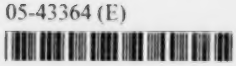

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 19 July 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2005/469)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Norway, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gillerman (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. De Soto to take a seat at the Council table.

I should also like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 20 July 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2005/472 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council being held tomorrow, Thursday, 21 July 2005, regarding the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to participate in this meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mrs. Barghouti (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: I should also like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 20 July 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request you to allow, pursuant to rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure, His Excellency Mr. Yahya Mahmassani to participate in the public debate on the Palestinian question which is to be held in the Security Council on Thursday, 21 July 2005."

That letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2005/471.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to His Excellency Mr. Yahya Mahmassani.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mahmassani took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 20 July 2005 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which reads as follows:

> "In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to request that I be invited to participate in the debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council."

In accordance with past practice in this matter, I propose that the Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Paul Badji took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 20 July 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour, in my capacity as Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Group at the United Nations, to request that the Security Council extend an invitation to Mr. Ahmad Hajihosseini, Chargé d'affaires of the permanent observer mission of the OIC to the United Nations, to participate in the meeting of the Security Council on 21 July 2005 to consider the recent developments in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the Palestinian question, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council."

That letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2005/473.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Hajihosseini.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Hajihosseini took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in response to the request contained in a letter dated 19 July 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, contained in document S/2005/469.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General. I now give him the floor.

Mr. De Soto: The forthcoming Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank continues to overshadow all other issues. That is a statement of fact.

Disengagement is an important step forward and withdrawal from occupied territory, albeit partial and on terms largely set by the occupier, is a positive, precedent-setting step and one that the entire international community cannot but support. Moreover, as stated repeatedly by the Quartet, it offers an opportunity to re-energize the road map. It is a moment pregnant with hope, but also fraught with peril.

With respect to the Quartet's engagement and activities, the Quartet has met in recent weeks to review the situation at this critical time. In a statement released after its meeting in London on 24 June, the Quartet underscored its commitment to the broader implementation of the road map, which this Council endorsed in its resolution 1515 (2003), and to the vision of two States —Israel and a sovereign, viable, democratic and contiguous Palestine —living side by side in peace and security.

The Quartet continues to consider the road map and the two-State vision to be the best way to achieve a permanent peace and an end to the occupation that began in 1967. The Quartet condemned the upsurge in violence in Gaza and urged both parties to avoid and prevent any escalation in violence so that the Israeli withdrawal could proceed peacefully. It highlighted the importance of Israeli withdrawal and reiterated its full support for its Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, Mr. James Wolfensohn, and his efforts to assist with the non-security aspects of disengagement and the revival of the Palestinian economy. The Quartet is intensifying its monitoring of the situation. Envoys met in Jerusalem only last week and will meet again next

month and in September. Mr. Wolfensohn has spent much time on the ground devoting his energy and ingenuity to restoring a sense of hope and security among Palestinians and Israelis following the apparent paucity of results of the much-anticipated meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Sharon and Palestinian President Abbas on 21 June.

Specifically, Mr. Wolfensohn's efforts are focusing on a set of six key issues, which the parties are addressing jointly and urgently with his help and encouragement. They are, first, border crossings and trade corridors; secondly, connecting Gaza with the West Bank; thirdly, movement within the West Bank; fourthly, the Gaza airport and seaport; fifthly, the houses in Israeli settlements; and sixthly, the greenhouses and dairy industry in the settlements.

In addition, Mr. Wolfensohn has pointed out three essential areas the Palestinians should address, with the support of the international community. Those are, first, the Palestinian Authority's fiscal crisis and development of a fiscal stabilization plan for incorporation into the 2006 budget; secondly, the creation of a broad development plan linked to a fiscally sound financial plan for 2006 to 2008; and thirdly, the design of a package of quick-impact economic programmes that would provide an adequate response to pressures and demands for employment generation in the short term. United Nations agencies operating in the occupied Palestinian territory remain committed to supporting Mr. Wolfensohn's rapid action programme.

With respect to violence, the last few weeks have seen a gradual erosion of the informal quasi-ceasefire that had prevailed since the Sharm el-Sheikh summit and President Abbas' Cairo agreement with Palestinian factions. Palestinian militants staged a number of attacks with mortar and Qassam rocket fire against Israeli settlements, as well as urban centres inside Israel. Shooting incidents in the West Bank, in particular, claimed the lives of several Israeli settlers, and the level of frequency of such incidents grew significantly. Partially in response to such incidents, Palestinian militants as well as unarmed Palestinians, among them teenagers, were killed by Israeli troops and security forces. On 20 June, a young woman from Gaza carrying 10 kilos of explosives — apparently a suicide bomber — was caught at the Erez crossing trying to enter Israel. Following the gradual increase in the violence of the last 10 days, Israel is taking more forceful action. The suicide bombing on 12 July in Netanya that killed five Israelis and wounded many others prompted Israeli forces to enter the West Bank city of Tulkarem, which, in turn, led to a firefight in which two Palestinians, one of them a member of the security forces, were killed.

Israeli forces have continued to operate in the West Bank city and have arrested large numbers of Palestinians. On 14 July, a Qassam rocket killed a young Israeli woman and wounded others, and Israel retaliated by firing missiles against targets in the Gaza Strip, after the Palestinian Authority's declaration of a state of emergency in the Strip and Palestinian security forces acting forcefully to prevent the launching of further rockets.

In the following days, the violence escalated further, with Israel, breaking the restraint observed in the past few months, resuming its earlier practices of targeted killings with the stated purpose of preventing terrorist operations. Seven Hamas militants were killed. Several escaped a missile attack on their vehicle. Israel began amassing military forces outside the Gaza Strip but vowed to give the Palestinian Authority a last chance to prevent mortar and Qassam rocket fire against Israeli targets inside and outside the Gaza Strip. Prior to those incidents, Israelis and Palestinians had continued their regular meetings in the realm of security with the help of United States Security Coordinator General William Ward.

The Palestinian Authority has been hard-pressed to establish law and order in both the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinian Authority President Abbas reiterated his commitment to working towards "one authority, one gun" — a clear pledge to assert the Palestinian Authority's monopoly on the use of force.

I have referred to recent efforts following the increase of rocket firing from Gaza by militants against Israeli targets, which saw a number of casualties among Palestinian security forces, militants, and the civilian population in Gaza. Earlier, a number of worrying incidents had underscored the imperative need and urgency for the Palestinian Authority to assert its control and end violence and internal unrest.

On 23 June, a Palestinian policeman was killed as gunmen opened fire on a police station in Jenin. Later that evening, the house of a Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) member in Jenin came under attack. Gun battles erupted on 24 June, as Palestinian

Authority security forces searched for and arrested 10 men suspected of being connected to the shooting incident.

Two international development workers were kidnapped on 13 July by armed Palestinians seeking the release of a family member from prison. United Nations intercession with the family helped to secure the release of the two later the same day.

More ominous were the statements and challenges to the Palestinian Authority emanating from Hamas prior to the confrontation between the militant group and the Palestinian Authority on 14 and 15 July. Rejecting an offer by President Abbas to join the Authority, a senior leader of the group threatened open confrontation with the Palestinian Authority and the continuation of attacks against Israel, "in order to liberate the West Bank and Jerusalem". But the Palestinian Authority has lately shown resolve to confront militants challenging its authority and to live up to its obligations under the road map to end the violence and begin dismantling terrorist capabilities.

On 23 June, a deal was reached involving the handover of weapons by more than 200 militants in Nablus, after earlier such deals had been reached and partially implemented in Tulkarem and Jericho. Upon Palestinian Authority President Abbas's arrival in Gaza last week, the barrage of rockets that was fired by militants against Israeli targets aggravated the problem further.

On 16 July, in a prime-time radio and television address, President Abbas made a ringing appeal to the Palestinians in which he strongly reiterated his commitment to assert his authority vis-à-vis militants threatening to upset the fragile calm that had prevailed in recent months. He stated:

> "No one is above the law, and we will chase those who participated in the attacks and punish them. There will be no more weapons on the street or in our cities and camps...We will use force against anyone who tries to trigger internal fighting ... Some have mistaken our keenness to preserve national unity as a sign of weakness. We will not allow anyone to obstruct the Israeli withdrawal."

Since then, with the help of Egyptian mediation, the clashes between Palestinian factions have given way to a renewed commitment to the relative calm that prevailed previously.

Turning to the Palestinian Authority elections, on 18 June, the Palestinian Legislative Council passed, with a significant majority, a new election law introducing the amendments proposed by President Abbas. The President additionally asked the PLC on 27 June to amend the Basic Law in order to create the position of Vice-President. No official decision has yet been announced concerning the date of the elections for the legislature, but the target appears to be January 2006.

Israeli domestic preparations for the withdrawal continue at a rapid pace. The Israeli authorities have had to deal with protests and demonstrations, efficaciously clearing a building in Gaza taken over by extremists opposed to disengagement. In addition to a number of arrests and minor injuries, a Palestinian teenager was attacked by Israeli extremists on 29 June but was rescued by an Israeli soldier. Following those incidents, the Gaza Strip was permanently closed off to Israelis not residing in the settlements there on 13 July. A similar order was issued with regard to the northern West Bank region, though its application has been left to the discretion of the local operational command.

On 3 July, the Cabinet had overwhelmingly rejected a proposal to postpone the withdrawal, thus underlining again the fact that the Government remains committed to the implementation of its plan, without delay. Following that vote, the Knesset, with an equally clear majority, rejected three bills calling for a delay of the withdrawal on 19 July, amid prolonged protest and demonstrations by those opposing disengagement and attempting to march on the Gaza settlement block of Gush Katif.

There is considerable evidence that settlement activity continues. Recent figures from the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics indicate that construction in West Bank and Gaza settlements during the first quarter of 2005 significantly exceeded the overall rate of construction in Israel. New tenders have also been published, most recently on 6 July, when the construction of 18 housing units in Elkana was publicized.

At its meeting on 24 June, the Quartet once again expressed its concern over Israeli settlement activity and reaffirmed the need to avoid any action that would contravene the road map or prejudice final-status negotiations. On the other hand, on 10 July, buildings in the West Bank settlement outpost of Amuna were

evacuated voluntarily after a petition against the settlers living there.

Israel has also continued and accelerated construction of its barrier in the West Bank. On 10 July, the Israeli Cabinet discussed and approved remaining details of the route of the barrier around Jerusalem, which, it is projected, will cut off some 55,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem from the rest of the city. The Government also decided on 1 September as the new deadline for the completion of the barrier around Jerusalem.

I now turn briefly to Lebanon, where the situation remains a cause for concern. The Council has already been briefed on the assassination of George Hawi on 21 June, and I will not dwell on it. On 12 July, an explosion in a northern suburb of the capital caused the death of one person and injuries to 13 others, including the then Deputy Prime Minister and current Minister of Defence, Elias Murr. Both the Secretary-General and the Security Council have issued statements on those matters.

After the successful conclusion of the parliamentary elections carried out under the Government led by Prime Minister Nejib Mikati, Lebanon set about forming its new Government. On 28 June, Nabih Berri was re-elected as the Speaker of the National Assembly and Fuad Siniora, former Minister of Finance, was designated Prime Minister. Two days ago, Mr. Siniora announced agreement on the membership of the Cabinet, which will be subject to a vote of confidence in parliament early next week.

On 29 June the Security Council met to discuss the exchange of fire that had taken place that day between Hizbullah and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), which began when a group of Hizbullah fighters breached the Blue Line in the Shaba'a farms area — one of several incidents along the Blue Line. The day after, Israeli helicopters violated Lebanese airspace and flew over the cities of Tyre, Sidon and Beirut dropping leaflets. Another incident occurred on 12 July, when, according to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), unidentified armed elements approached the Blue Line from the Lebanese side and fired four rounds from an AK-47 rifle towards an IDF position. Also over the past two weeks, there have been a substantial number of daily ground violations by Lebanese shepherds and civilians along the length of the Blue Line. The Secretary-General's report on UNIFIL (S/2005/460) refers to all of those matters.

The incidents along the Blue Line of 29 June and 12 July illustrate once again the need for the Government of Lebanon to make every effort to prevent attacks from its side of the Blue Line. Responding to the situation on the ground, the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Southern Lebanon again urged the Lebanese authorities to exert their control over all of the country and to refrain from any violation of the Blue Line. He also called on Israel to cease its continuing violations of Lebanese airspace. Maximum restraint will be required in order to prevent the deterioration that all sides state they wish to avoid.

My erstwhile colleague Kieran Prendergast last briefed the Council in June and announced that I would come this month to give members my "first impressions". That is a tall order. The old vaudeville expression that someone is a hard act to follow applies doubly in this case: I walk in the footsteps not only of Kieran Prendergast, but also of Terje Roed-Larsen. Both brought to their work vast Middle East experience — decidedly not my case.

I ask members to bear in mind those mitigating circumstances as they consider the very personal closing comments I am about to offer, barely six weeks after taking on my current assignment. Without detriment to the United Nations commitment to the achievement of a comprehensive peace, I will concentrate on the Israeli-Palestinian portion of my mandate.

As I said at the outset, Israel's disengagement from Gaza dominates the agenda less than one month before the announced starting date. Some commentators draw an incongruous parallel between rocket and mortar attacks by Palestinian militants in Gaza against Israelis and the less lethal but very strident physical efforts of Israeli disengagement opponents to impede the implementation of that decision. They have in common only that they are rear-guard efforts to obstruct a move that is viewed positively by clear majorities on both sides.

The driving force behind the Israeli Government's decision to remove settlers from Gaza and to end the Israeli presence there is Israel's own interest. Prime Minister Sharon describes evacuation from Gaza as "vital" to Israel. In the classic calculus

that a win for one side is a loss for the other, satisfying an Israeli interest may strike some Palestinians as a loss, judging from their efforts to jeopardize it. Here, however, we are in the presence of an important step which defies that calculus: how could the dismantling — the first ever — of Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory be anything but a gain for the Palestinian side, offering as it does — through the efforts of James Wolfensohn, with the strong support of the international community — the prospect of an early and tangible improvement in the daily lives of Palestinians and a return, via the road map, to substantive peace efforts?

Although the deterioration of the informal ceasefire is profoundly disquieting, there have been encouraging developments since late last week, consisting of the vigorous actions of the Palestinian Authority security forces, pursuant to President Abbas's efforts, to restore law and order and particularly to intercept militants preparing to attack Israelis. The President's forceful address to his people at the end of last week was a most welcome display of leadership. Hope was also provided by the report only two days ago that the ceasefire has been renewed and that the Palestinian factions are committed to end internal fighting.

I have no doubt regarding the determination of the Government of Israel to proceed unswervingly with disengagement. Israeli authorities have provided clear evidence that they will not allow Israeli extremists to prevent the plan from being carried out. It is to be hoped that the combination of measures by the Palestinian Authority and the return of relative calm will make it unnecessary for the Israeli Defence Forces to use the unlimited discretion that they have reportedly been given to take intrusive military action to quash attacks against Israelis from Gaza. At this time, it is essential not to lose sight of the overall goal.

The unease, suspicion and even cynicism that bedevil Israeli-Palestinian relations can be attributed in large part to the fact that the disengagement is not taking place within an unequivocally agreed framework for the next steps towards the overall solution to which both sides claim adherence, that is, two States living alongside one another in peace. Israelis need to be assured of their security, and Palestinians need to be provided with hope. Beyond the tangible improvements in their daily lives, the intangible element of a perspective for the future would be critical to instilling that hope.

It is of paramount importance that stability be preserved and that the Palestinian Authority be empowered to successfully counter militancy and extremism. Such empowerment will also be an element of central significance in the preparations to take control of the areas that Israel is withdrawing from. As we have stated repeatedly in the Council in recent months, and as United States Security Coordinator Lieutenant General Ward has pointed out, Israel could and should do more to support the Palestinian Authority in its efforts to reign in the militants. Consequently, both the Palestinian Authority and Israel have homework to do: the Palestinian Authority has to continue to exert control and authority, while Israel has to strengthen the hand of moderate forces and enable the Authority to impose itself successfully.

One area in which Israel can and should take the initiative is meeting its parallel obligations under the road map, in accordance with which Israel should freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth, and immediately dismantle all settlement outposts erected since March 2001. The recent voluntary evacuation of the West Bank outpost of Amuna — after a petition had been filed against the settlers living there following the Government's official adoption of the Sasson report's recommendations — illustrates that it is possible to meet those obligations.

It is equally important that Israel take steps to meet its legal obligations related to the barrier. One senior Israeli cabinet minister recently stated that, among other things, the route of the barrier "also makes Jerusalem more Jewish". While it would not be entirely fair to hold the Government to a perhaps inadvertent choice of words of an official in the heat of a radio interview, that and the revelation that some 55,000 Palestinian residents of Jerusalem will be shut out of the city as a result of the routing can only fuel the fear that the barrier is designed to prejudge the outcome of eventual permanent status negotiations. Those issues should be as much a part of the short-term action agenda as energetic Palestinian action against militants targeting Israelis.

The broader implementation of the road map and the eventual realization of the two-State solution, as outlined in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002), must remain the goal. We aspire to the end of the

occupation that began in 1967, the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State and its coexistence in peace and security alongside Israel. We also continue to work towards the broader realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, in accordance with the road map and the 2002 Beirut Arab summit declaration and based on resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), and 1515 (2003).

In sum, while there was a perilous turn back to the abyss in the past month or so, there have been some glimmers, particularly in the last week, that may point to a new beginning.

The President: I shall now give the floor to the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mrs. Barghouti (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, I should like to express our deepest regret in connection with the painful events that took place a short time ago, and again today, in London. Let me reaffirm our condemnation of such terrorist acts targeting innocent civilians. Intensified international efforts are required to combat such crimes, irrespective of who their perpetrators are.

At the outset of my statement, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. We are confident that your experience and wisdom will lead to the success of the Council's deliberations. And allow me to thank the Permanent Representative of France for his presidency of the Council last month.

I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Alvaro de Soto on his appointment as Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. The delegation of Palestine always stands ready to cooperate with him to ensure the success of his difficult mission. We thank him for his comprehensive and detailed briefing to the Council this morning, which we shall not discuss in our statement because we wish to focus on the latest and the gravest events.

The Security Council is meeting this morning to discuss the difficult and deteriorating conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. While the international community is directing its efforts towards the success of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and some areas in the northern West Bank, Israel, the occupying Power, is accelerating its steps to carry out its expansionist, colonialist plan, expanding colonial settlements, speeding the building of the wall and isolating the occupied section of Jerusalem from the West Bank. The Israeli Government is exploiting the fact that the international community is focused on, and desires to see, the success of the withdrawal from Gaza by accelerating the creation of facts on the ground, thus imposing an illegitimate fait accompli in the attempt to undermine all possibilities of creating an independent, sovereign Palestinian State within the borders of June 1967.

The Israeli Government's approval on Sunday, 10 July of the route inside East Jerusalem of the separation wall, which segment is expected to be completed in the next few months, is a grave development. It is a direct challenge to the international community, all the more so because it coincides with the one-year anniversary of the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the wall, which ruled that the wall was illegal, that Israel had the obligation to immediately cease construction and demolish the parts that had been built and that Israel must repeal all laws pertaining to the wall. The Court further emphasized that the United Nations — in particular the General Assembly and the Security Council — must consider the additional measures necessary to put an end to the situation of illegality resulting from the construction of the separation wall and from the related regime.

Because of its desire to see the success of Israeli disengagement from Gaza, the international community has been reluctant to exert pressure on the Israeli Government and has been condoning Israel's current settlement activities, its land confiscations, its isolation of Jerusalem and its work to complete the wall; that will not necessarily succeed in reviving the peace process or the implementation of the road map. To the contrary, we believe that this situation portends a veritable catastrophe with dire consequences for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, for the region and for the world, and that it could undermine a final two-State solution.

Today, the Palestinian people is being subjected to siege, oppression and killing. The suffering it undergoes daily is escalating. Economic and social conditions are deteriorating because Israel, the occupying Power, continues to violate international law

and international humanitarian law. It flouts United Nations resolutions and, indeed, international unanimity. In that way, it poses the greatest of challenges to the international community and to the sanctity of international law. It is as if that State were above the law.

Since September 2000, the occupying forces have killed more than 3,670 Palestinians. They have wounded more than 45,000 others. They have wreaked widespread destruction, including the demolition of homes and the destruction of industrial and agricultural areas and infrastructure. In numerous letters, we have informed the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly of the terrifying developments on the ground and of Israel's violations of international law and international humanitarian law. Those violations include the continuing extrajudicial killings, the killing or wounding of civilians, the random and excessive use of force, the continuing closures, the prevention of the movement of individuals and goods and, more serious still, the continuing colonization of our lands, the continuing expansion of illegal settlements and the construction of the wall. These destroy our present, our future and the possibility of peace between the two sides and of the implementation of a two-State solution.

The understandings previously reached at Sharm el-Sheikh were an encouraging beginning for a return to the negotiating table and for calming conditions on the ground. The Palestinian National Authority has taken a number of steps to meet its Sharm el-Sheikh commitments. But the Israeli Government has met none of its commitments, least of all with regard to withdrawal to the lines of September 2000, the freeing of prisoners and ending illegal extrajudicial assassinations, the closures and the siege imposed on our people.

The Palestinian leadership is committed to negotiation as a means to reach a peaceful settlement based on respect for international law and international legitimacy. In that regard, the Palestinian National Authority is eager to see Israel's disengagement from Gaza be successfully carried out in a calm manner, so that we can move directly to the implementation of the road map leading to final negotiations. We stress the importance of the completion of Israel's disengagement from Gaza and from parts of the northern West Bank before the end of 2005. It is important that the international community not permit Israel to use prevarication and procrastination to distract it while completing its colonial settlement plan for the West Bank.

We are very grateful, Mr. President, for the speed with which you responded to the request for the convening of this meeting. We hope that the Security Council will be able to take immediate measures to address this expansionist policy, which is a flagrant violation of international law and which violates the terms of the road map and Israel's commitments set out in it.

Once again, we reiterate our call to the international community to abide by the legal opinion of the International Court of Justice. Here, United Nations bodies, including the Secretariat, the General Assembly and the Security Council, should accelerate the implementation of their obligations set out in the opinion and in General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 with regard to establishing a register of damage and to following up on the report to the Assembly requested from Switzerland, in its capacity as repositary of the Geneva Conventions.

In that regard, we will be calling for a resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly. That, however, does not set aside the responsibilities and duties of the Security Council as set out in the International Court of Justice opinion.

We look forward to the day when the international community, and in particular the Security Council, will ensure that Israel respects international law and international humanitarian law, in accordance with the Court's opinion of approximately one year ago, and will ensure that Israel respects the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, particularly its right of self-determination and its right to the cessation of Israeli occupation of its land.

The President: I thank the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine for the kind words she addressed to me.

I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): Allow me at the outset, Mr. President, to congratulate you again on your leadership of the Security Council. I should also like to congratulate Mr. Alvaro de Soto on the assumption of his important and daunting tasks and to commend him for his clear, comprehensive and professional report.

As we sit here today at the behest of the Palestinians, we should all ask ourselves, why indeed are we here? Are we here to deal once again in acrimony and spend precious time on diatribes and distorted facts, as we have just witnessed and heard? Or should we, at this watershed moment in the history of our war-torn region, seize the moment to see the larger picture and paint the wide canvas our people deserve and that the Council should, and I believe truly wants to, paint.

However, I feel a certain degree of gratitude for the opportunity given to us today by this Palestinian initiative to discuss the situation in the Middle East, or as the initiators of this meeting have chosen to call it, "the dire situation on the ground". Let me share with the Council the situation on the ground, which is truly dire. The situation that has seen more than 25,400 terrorist attacks against Israelis in less than five years is indeed dire.

To put things in perspective in this world we live in — which, as we have witnessed again today, is a very cruel and cynical one — that is an average of more than a terrorist attack every two hours, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for five consecutive years.

On the ground, in Netanya, on 12 July, a young Palestinian strapped with explosives detonated himself at the entrance of a shopping mall. Five people, including two teenaged girls, died in that suicide attack: Julia Voloshin, Anya Lifshitz, Moshe Maor Jan, Rachel Ben Abu and Nofar Horowitz — fathers, mothers and children. These halls must never forget their names. Ninety more people were wounded in that horrendous attack alone.

The situation on the ground in the Israeli community of Beit Hagai is also dire. On 24 June, Palestinian terrorists driving a vehicle opened fire on several Israeli civilians, all of them just teenagers, killing one of them.

The situation on the ground is dire in the Israeli village of Nativ Ha'asara. On 14 July, a 22-year-old woman was killed while sitting on the porch of her home, as a result of a Qassam rocket. Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade have showered the skies this month with Qassam rockets. That tiny community has suffered nearly 1,000 such rockets in recent years. Several other communities were also shelled on 14 July, with rockets landing near a nursery school, near a playground, and directly hitting people's homes.

The situation on the ground in Shlomi is also dire. On Israel's Independence Day, only a few weeks ago, in the midst of celebrations, members of a terrorist militia in southern Lebanon fired a 107-millimetre mortar shell specifically at civilian targets.

Those are only a few examples of the incessant terrorist activities resulting in the murder of innocent civilians. The situation on the ground for those who died, their families, neighbours and friends is gruesome, cruel and, indeed, dire.

The situation in the Middle East is also dire, given that on the other side of our northern border the only force that is in control of the territory is a terrorist organization helped, sponsored and guided by two States Members of the Organization.

As we speak, the Government of Israel is preparing to implement a fateful and unprecedented initiative: the disengagement of all Israeli civilians and forces from the Gaza Strip and the dismantling of four settlements in the northern West Bank. Israel is taking bold, courageous actions to reinvigorate the peace process on behalf of all those involved in this drawn-out conflict.

As I have said, that initiative is unprecedented in its scope, in the challenges it raises and in the hope it has the potential to give to the Palestinian and Israeli peoples alike. As anyone following developments in our region is aware, this is a painful and heart-wrenching moment for the Israeli people. The implementation of this plan, in the absence of any corresponding acts of good faith from our Palestinian neighbours, has created troubled divisions within our society. But the Israeli Government and its leaders, at no small political and, sadly, personal risk, are determined to follow through on their commitment to implement that important and bold initiative.

The disengagement initiative is not Israel's first plan of choice. We would have preferred a fully negotiated agreement with our Palestinian neighbours. Indeed, Israel's Prime Minister made that clear in December 2003, when outlining the disengagement initiative for the first time. Addressing the Palestinians, he said:

> "We would like you to govern yourselves in your own country: a democratic Palestinian State with territorial integrity and economic viability, which could conduct normal relations of tranquillity,

> security and peace with Israel ....We hope that the Palestinian Authority will carry out its part. However, if in a few months the Palestinians still continue to disregard their part in implementing the road map, then Israel will initiate the unilateral security step of disengagement from the Palestinians".

Since then Israel has waited not months, but years; and the Palestinian Authority still shows no sign of implementing even the first commitment in the road map, which calls for

> "an unequivocal end to violence and terrorism and ... visible efforts on the ground to arrest, disrupt and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks on Israelis anywhere".

The terrorist attack in the shopping mall in Netanya just 10 days ago gives voice to the sad truth behind the plethora of terrorist attacks: they endanger not just the lives of Israeli citizens but also innocent Palestinians, the new Palestinian leadership, the disengagement plan and the peace process as a whole. It should be very clear, however, that Israel will not waver in its intention to complete the disengagement and pursue peace. We should hope that the leaders of the Palestinian Authority will confront the threat of terrorism accordingly. If the Palestinian leadership does not eradicate terrorism, terrorism will ultimately eradicate it.

The prevention of terror emanating from Palestinian areas is entirely the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority and its leadership, a responsibility that it has thus far has failed to fulfil. Moreover, even the previous period of quiet was only superficial. In that time, dozens of terrorist acts were carried out every month, and a far greater number prevented. In fact, the campaign of terror has continued unabated, at varying levels of intensity, since September 2000. As I stated before — and this number must resonate in the Chamber yet again — nearly 25,400 terror attacks were committed since then, of which 142 were homicide bomb attacks.

The Palestinian delegation requested the convening of this meeting of the Security Council in order to discuss the conditions on the ground. Let there be no confusion about the situation in Israel: we are in the midst of a historic, courageous political decision in order to improve the lives of Israelis and Palestinians. It is almost cynical that the Palestinian Authority is raising these issues with the Security Council at a time when the deteriorating security situation is the result of Palestinian terrorists and the Palestinian Authority's unwillingness to fulfil its obligations. The impression one gets is that this debate is somehow a smokescreen for more broken Palestinian promises. And, in their wake, Israel must do everything within its ability to combat terrorism. That is the foremost responsibility and right of any nation: to protect the lives of its citizens.

The onus of preventing Palestinian terrorism in all its forms lies clearly with the Palestinian Authority. Israel has transferred control over cities to the Palestinian Authority and armed Palestinian security forces in exchange for promises that the Palestinians would combat terror, which is a commitment reiterated in the road map. As a result of the Palestinian leadership's failure to confront terrorism, Israel was left with no choice but to find defensive measures to protect itself, such as the security fence.

The reality is that the security fence works. It saves hundreds of lives. There has been a reduction of over 90 per cent in the number of successful terrorist attacks, a 70 per cent reduction in the number of citizens killed and an 85 per cent reduction in the number of wounded. All of that can be attributed directly to the effectiveness of the security fence. In Samaria, for instance, 448 individuals died as a result of terrorist attacks prior to the completion of the security fence in August 2003.

Israel remains sensitive, however, to the impact of the necessary defensive measures it has been forced to take. Israel is coordinating with Palestinian Authority officials in order to facilitate humanitarian passage in all areas. As we speak, teams of Israeli and United Nations experts are examining the consequences of those measures on the freedom of movement of Palestinian civilians. Israel and the Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, James Wolfensohn, are working together to enhance contiguous movement between Palestinian areas.

Indeed, the fence's routing has been altered a number of times, either as a result of the continuous judicial review to which it is subjected or as a result of humanitarian concerns that have come to light only upon the completion of a certain section. Each section of the fence is scrupulously examined in light of strict

humanitarian criteria as determined by the Israeli High Court of Justice, the only justice system in the region where an Arab or Palestinian can go to court against his own Government, seek justice and get it, rather than be thrown in prison or get beheaded. It should also be noted that the construction of the fence has enabled Israel to remove checkpoints, thus relaxing day-to-day freedom of movement in northern Samaria.

Israel has further established methods to address difficulties that might arise as a result of the fence's construction, both on the practical level — such as the more than 70 agricultural gates in the fence — and on the legal level by providing affected landowners the possibility of lodging objections to the proposed route and of claiming compensation from a special standing fund established precisely for that purpose. That mechanism guarantees appropriate compensation for those affected and obviates the need for any alternative measure, such as the ill-proposed register.

In the absence of any demonstrable leadership on the Palestinian side, it has fallen to Israel to implement its disengagement initiative. Even as a reluctant fallback plan, however, the disengagement initiative — let it be clear — is not a replacement for negotiations. Indeed, as Israel has repeatedly stated, the initiative can pave the way to the implementation of the road map and lead the parties back to the road to a negotiated resolution of the conflict.

However, for the disengagement initiative to play the role as a bridge to increased cooperation and a return to the road map process requires recognition — both from the Palestinian side and from the international community — that there are rights on both sides of that equation, including the Israeli side, and responsibilities on both sides, including the Palestinian side. The road map sponsored by the Quartet, of which the United Nations is a member, is predicated on the assumption that both sides have commitments and responsibilities for which they must be held accountable.

Initiatives that seek to focus exclusively on and exaggerate Palestinian victimization, while avoiding Palestinian responsibility, not only ignore genuine Israeli concerns, but do a grave disservice to all those Palestinians seeking reform, transparency and accountability. For there to be any genuine possibility of a lasting resolution to the conflict, all parties, including the international community, have to abandon the simplistic and one-sided representations that have distorted the true reality, and recognize that no side has a monopoly on suffering and that the dreams of neither side can be fulfilled in full.

The Security Council convenes today to address grievances that do little to improve peace efforts in the region. Critics of Israel were historically obsessed with ending the occupation of disputed lands, yet once Israel engaged a plan to hand over land in an act of good will, as it is doing today, its critics obfuscate the issue by diverting the attention of the Council to this untimely and unnecessary discussion. Let this Council see through that diversion and the very absurdity it represents.

Let there be no mistake — Israel has great respect for the Council and the revered principles upon which it was built. It is precisely because of our deep respect for those principles that we find dismay in the pernicious attempt to hijack its mandate and actions. Today's discussion signifies yet another blemish in this Council's agenda. It is such diversions that influence the need for United Nations reform. We call upon this Council to look beyond the diversion and witness the larger picture: a tiny country, marred by terrorism, mobilizing its citizenry and political will to take a bold step for peace in the region.

Let us not be diverted by false rhetoric. Let us not be blinded by distorted images. Let us not be derailed by old tactics. Let us rise to the occasion, observe the large and hopeful picture, and seize this moment to allow this historic process to be successfully completed. Let us march forward rather than backwards, in hope rather than despair, towards a better future for our children — Israeli and Palestinian alike.

The President: I thank the representative of Israel for his kind words addressed to me.

We have a long list of speakers. I am fully aware of the importance of the discussion that we are having today and fully aware of past practices. Nevertheless, I wish to kindly request all speakers to limit their statements, to the extent possible, to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I wish to begin by thanking Mr. Alvaro de Soto for his briefing on the most recent events in the Middle East. I wish him every success in his complex tasks.

It is with great concern that we have recently witnessed a further deterioration of the situation and a renewed rise of tension in the Middle East. Indeed, following a calm of several months, extrajudicial killings, repression and acts of violence have resumed with fervour. We sadly note that, yet again, the victims have been civilians and that the vast majority have been Palestinian.

At a time when we were full of hope at seeing the long-dormant peace process show some signs of life and the resumption of the implementation of the road map following the national Palestinian consensus on the declaration of a ceasefire that allowed political activities to resume and Israel's commitment to withdraw from Gaza — and it must be recalled that the withdrawal needs to be coordinated with the Palestinian Authority and lead to a complete departure from all territories occupied since 1967 — Israel has once again cast doubt on the revived impetus of the peace process. In point of fact, the Israeli Government recently decided to extend settlements in the West Bank, primarily around Al-Quds, and to step up construction of the wall around that city. The consequence and aim of that measure are quite clearly to break the last remaining geographic link between the Holy City and the rest of the Palestinian territories.

In that regard, I wish to recall that Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory are unlawful and illegal under international law and that the Israeli decision to expand them is but a fresh attempt to impose another fait accompli in order to obstruct efforts aimed at a just and lasting settlement and thereby impede the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian State.

Taking advantage of the impunity which it has always enjoyed even within the Council, Israel has consistently adopted a policy of fait accompli and of the use of force, disregarding the principles of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The latest provocation was the fact that the decision taken by Israel on 9 July regarding the line of the wall around Jerusalem coincides with the first anniversary of the publication of the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion, in which it stated unequivocally that the construction of the separation wall in Palestinian territory was illegal. That same decision was taken by the General Assembly in resolution ES-10/15 on 20 July 2004. In its opinion, the Court touched on the very source of the conflict in the Middle East — the illegal occupation by Israel of Palestinian territories.

The fact that Israel took that decision at that precise time is proof — as if proof were needed — of the disregard that Israel has always had for international law. It is a harsh blow for the international efforts under way, and it can lead only to a deterioration of the recent positive climate that was beginning to prevail recently in the region and unleash further violence.

As recommended by the Court, the Security Council should consider what actions should be taken in order to put an end to the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall. It should consider also measures to induce Israel to end extrajudicial executions and the demolition of houses, dismantle the settlements and tear down the illegal separation wall.

Moreover, it is urgent for the Quartet to intervene to dissuade Israel from implementing its decision to expand its settlements and to induce it to honour its commitments under the road map. That would allow for the resumption of a serious and lasting peace process, with a view to putting an end to Israeli occupation and to guaranteeing the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Finally, the economic situation in the occupied territories, as described, is of the greatest concern to us. This situation is worsened by the financial difficulties faced by Palestinian Authority, which has already been weakened by Israel's incessant attacks on its infrastructure, combined with blockades in the territories and repeated Israeli incursions, particularly those involving the demolition of houses.

Further, I would express the concern of my delegation at the situation in the Syrian Golan, where Israel's ongoing settlement policy continues to undermine regional and international efforts aimed at arriving at a just and comprehensive peace in the region, as well as the situation in Lebanon, where, despite Security Council resolutions, incidents have been occurring once again and where violations and

acts of aggression against the sovereignty of that country, as well as provocations, have taken place in recent weeks.

The international community, represented by the Quartet, must take action to arrive at a just and lasting settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, based on respect for resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), as well as on the principle of land for peace.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process, Mr. De Soto, for the briefing he has given us on the current state of the peace process.

We were very alarmed to hear of the acute flare-up of tensions in the Gaza area. This happened as a result of attempts by extremist forces in that area to stir up the military and political situation and to cause the situation to deteriorate in the run-up to Israel's planned withdrawal, in mid-August, from Gaza and a portion of the West Bank of the Jordan River. The radicals also obviously are attempting to undermine the policy of peace agreements with Israel, which have been implemented by the head of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Abbas.

We believe that the best response to those forces that oppose progress in the Palestinian-Israeli settlement process is a responsible and restrained position by the parties and coordinated steps in the area of security that are designed to prevent anarchy and uncontrolled violence.

It is important now for the Israelis and the Palestinians strictly to abide by the Sharm el-Sheikh agreements and to move forward, in a coordinated manner, with efforts to resolve those issues, in order to ensure Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, which must be an organic part of the process set out in the road map.

Russia, together with other members of the Quartet and other interested parties, remains fully prepared to provide all necessary assistance to advance the Israeli-Palestinian negotiating process and actively to facilitate practical efforts to establish a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East.

In that regard, we call on the parties to refrain from any steps that could predetermine the results of final status talks, first and foremost as regards Israel's continuing construction of the separation wall, whose path, particularly in the area of Jerusalem, affects the interests of the Palestinians. We would also fully affirm the legitimate right of Israel to self-defence against terrorist attacks.

We are concerned about the settlement issue. We have already said that we expected the Government of Israel to keep its promise to deal with the settlements upon completion of the relocation process. We continue to expect this.

At present, all efforts of the international community are focussed on promoting Palestinian-Israeli cooperation in the run-up to implementation of the relocation plan. However, the Russian side has called for, and will continue to call for, the achievement of a comprehensive Middle East settlement — meaning the achievement of peace also on the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks. Failing that, there can be no stability in the Middle East.

We view the relocation plan as only the start of renewed movement, in the context of the road map, towards implementation by both the Israeli and Palestinian parties of their obligations under that document which, we are firmly convinced, is the only alternative and whose implementation is the most certain way to achieve a settlement for the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Given the complexity of the problems which face the participants in the settlement process, we would like to remind the Council once again of our proposal to hold, in the fall of this year, a high-level expert meeting to discuss the results of the relocation and to determine longer-term strategies for the international community in the context of the peace process.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank Alvaro de Soto for his briefing and for his comments. We wish him every success in carrying out his mission, which is both difficult and important.

Permit me to begin by indicating that my delegation subscribes fully to the statement to be made shortly by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union.

Several weeks before the Israeli disengagement from Gaza is to begin, the situation in the Middle East unfortunately remains a subject of great concern. As that important stage approaches, every effort must be

made to ensure that there is not a new spiral of violence. The ceasefire is one of the most valuable and most fragile achievements of recent months. Its preservation requires that the parties show the greatest restraint and that they resume their dialogue and cooperation, including in the area of security, to put an end to the violence.

France therefore most strongly condemns the suicide attack committed in Netanya exactly a week ago and the rocket and mortar fire that claimed the lives of Israeli civilians. We call upon the Palestinian Authority to intensify its efforts to restore public order in the Palestinian territories. That is an absolute imperative a few weeks before the withdrawal from Gaza begins. For its part, Israel must show restraint and, in particular, must put an end to its policy of targeted killings, which can only exacerbate the spiral of violence.

As Alvaro de Soto rightly said, a successful Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is in everyone's interests. But the Palestinians' political future must not be limited to the withdrawal; that must be an initial step within the framework of the road map. In that connection, the Quartet must fully play its role of engaging and assisting the parties in carrying out their obligations under the road map. We therefore favour the holding of an international conference at the appropriate time.

With regard to the security barrier, we fully recognize Israel's right to take forceful measures to protect its citizens against terrorism. But the route decided upon for the security barrier is now giving rise to many concerns. In fact, the barrier extends into Palestinian territories several kilometres to the east of the Green Line, contradicting the relevant provisions of international law, as the International Court of Justice stated last year in its advisory opinion. The construction, if it were to be irreversible, would constitute a de facto annexation of a substantial part of the West Bank. It would seriously compromise the prospects for a negotiated solution to the conflict by prejudging the border of a future Palestinian State and indeed by making the building of such a State physically impossible.

The construction of the wall is giving rise to large-scale dispossession. It puts thousands of Palestinians in a very precarious situation. The wall socially and economically destabilizes entire regions and threatens the economic and geographic viability of a future Palestinian State.

We therefore call upon the Israeli Government to halt the construction of the barrier within Palestinian territories, including around East Jerusalem, and to dismantle the existing sections there, in accordance with the relevant provisions of international law. The European Union will not agree to any non-negotiated modification of the borders established before 1967.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): We join previous speakers in thanking Ambassador Alvaro de Soto, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his update on the situation in the Middle East, which reminded us of the many obstacles that continue to confront the peace process.

During the last briefing to the Council on this subject, hopes of reaching a Palestinian-Israeli understanding were expressed after an improved political climate had developed in the region. The successful completion of the presidential elections in January, followed by the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings in February and the London meeting in March, provided an opportunity for Israeli and Palestinian leaders to commit themselves to end violence, to build trust and to work together towards an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the West Bank in August. Given that positive momentum, the international community committed itself to support the parties in moving the peace process forward. Emphasis was placed on a full and complete withdrawal consistent with the road map, marking an important step towards realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security.

Recent events on the ground have suddenly overshadowed those positive gains through unrelenting violence and counter-violence, resulting in the injuries or deaths of several innocent people and in the loss of property. The renewed state of violence is, in our view, quite alarming. We continue to condemn the suicide bombing in Netanya and the firing of rockets that killed several innocent Israeli civilians. We urge that those events, coming less than one month before Israel's scheduled pullout, should not be allowed to undermine the withdrawal, which is an important element of the peace process.

It is therefore our hope that the withdrawal will be sustained, coordinated and peaceful. In that regard, we commend the Palestinian Authority for its prompt

action in preventing the continuation of the attacks directed against Israel and in insisting on a smooth Israeli withdrawal. For its part, the Israeli Government has acted well by rejecting requests for delay in the withdrawal and by standing firm against opposition to the disengagement process.

However, we regret the decision to proceed with the construction of the separation wall in and around East Jerusalem. That step, together with the accelerated settlement activity, does not bode well for the peace process. The continued construction of the wall and the settlement activity go against earlier understandings and stand to undermine the true spirit of mutual confidence that is critical if any substantial progress towards peace is to be made.

We urge both the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to remain steadfast in their search for peace and security for their peoples and for the region. In the past, they have shown that they can overcome the many challenges that they face. We have an obligation to encourage and support them. The setbacks that they encounter must not be allowed to derail the peace process.

I now turn to the matter of the Blue Line separating Israel and Lebanon. We are concerned at reported violations by both sides that have led to injury and loss of life. We urge the new Lebanese authorities to strive to exercise greater control over all their territory and to bring to an end the attacks emanating from its side. Israel, for its part, should refrain from air violations of the Blue Line. Neither the two parties nor any of us must move backward; we must preserve the gains made so far.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I wish to thank Alvaro de Soto for his comprehensive briefing and insightful comments. My delegation — myself in particular, because of my longstanding friendship with Mr. De Soto — was very pleased at his appointment as Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, which was a clear recognition of his diplomatic skill and capacity.

I also express our appreciation for the holding of this public meeting in response to the request made by the Arab Group.

The peoples of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories now face a critical moment that has the true potential to overcome the deadlock and the paralysis that have characterized the peace process in recent years. As our delegation sees it, the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the northern West Bank is a first, yet are important, step towards the end of the occupation and the embodiment of the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, by means of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement to the conflict. It is therefore essential that it be successful.

In that context, the Israeli Government should be encouraged to persevere in its efforts towards disengagement in accordance with the proposed timetable. Coordination with the Palestinian Authority, so that the operation can be undertaken in a smooth and orderly manner, is of crucial importance. Actions taken in that regard in recent weeks should be commended, and my delegation believes that they must be intensified in the days to come. At the same time, facilitation efforts undertaken by international partners and neighbouring States are to be praised.

Our Government noted with satisfaction the most recent statement by the Quartet principals in London, in which they emphasized the urgent need for Israel and the Palestinians to work directly and cooperatively with each other, with the assistance of James Wolfensohn, the Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement. The Quartet also stressed that the coordinated support of the international donor community is crucial for the success of Mr. Wolfensohn's mission, and it urged Arab States to engage fully in that regard.

The complex, sensitive character of the Israeli withdrawal requires that calm and stability prevail on the ground to the greatest extent possible. My delegation believes that the recent escalation of violence in the area runs counter to the interests of both sides and that the parties must do their utmost to ensure restraint and must abide by the understandings achieved at Sharm el-Sheikh, with a view to maintaining the ceasefire.

The practice of extrajudicial killings by Israeli forces, resumed in recent days, must be halted. My delegation also followed with deep concern the intensification of rocket and mortar attacks by Palestinian armed groups against Israeli targets, including civilians. One of those attacks resulted in the death of an Israeli girl of Brazilian origin, a sad fact that our people received with profound regret. My

delegation also condemns the terrorist attack that took place in Netanya some days ago. In that context, my Government viewed positively the news that the commitment to the ceasefire made by Palestinian factions will be honoured. Brazil believes that, at this stage, all Palestinians should be focused on supporting and providing leverage to the Palestinian Authority in its undertakings.

Confidence-building is a core element at the present juncture. My delegation is therefore alarmed at news of increasing settlement activities in the West Bank and, even worse, Israel's revision of the route of the wall and the acceleration of its construction around Jerusalem. Those measures deeply affect efforts to promote trust between the two Governments and between their peoples. They also have a very negative impact on the prospects for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the conflict, as they affect core final status issues.

The construction of the wall around Jerusalem is likely to affect the daily lives of 55,000 people, as the Special Coordinator mentioned this morning. Moreover, it also prejudges the resolution of a dispute over an issue that has been central since the creation of the partition plan and which has been subject to many resolutions of the United Nations, by both the Security Council and the General Assembly. I recall that any solution on the status of Jerusalem should take into account the legitimate concerns of both sides and include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure freedom of religion and of conscience for all its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to all Jerusalem's holy sites by people of all religions and nationalities. Israel should be encouraged to reverse its decision on that matter, as well as to comply with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in all activities related to the wall.

Brazil is deeply alarmed at the dire humanitarian and economic situation in the occupied territories. In that context, my delegation commends the endeavours undertaken by Special Envoy Wolfensohn to address that situation and alleviate the plight of the Palestinian people. My Government is willing to contribute to those efforts, in particular by providing assistance and expertise for the establishment of social programmes on the ground. The Brazilian authorities are deeply interested in exploring modalities of cooperation in that regard.

Most of all, however, my delegation stresses the importance of Israel facing up to its responsibilities in that field by easing constraints on the flow of goods and people in and out of Gaza and the West Bank and between them.

With respect to the situation in Lebanon, my delegation is pleased at the designation of the new Government. Brazil is certain that the new authorities will work in the interest, and for the benefit, of all Lebanese people. For its part, the international community should be supportive of the Government's efforts. Actions that could have a negative impact on Lebanese unity and stability must be avoided.

With respect to the situation along the Blue Line, my delegation reiterates its call on both sides for restraint and full compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. In the coming days, the Council will consider the Secretary-General's report on the activities of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (S/2005/460). Brazil favours the renewal of the Force's mandate for a further six-month period, taking into account the prevailing tensions in the area and the request made by the Lebanese Government in that regard.

Finally, I wish to reaffirm our commitment to a comprehensive peace in the Middle East that takes into account the need to address all aspects of the conflict.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation thanks Mr. Alvaro de Soto for his detailed briefing. We know Mr. De Soto very well; he is an old friend. He has many years of experience in the service of the United Nations, and we have high hopes for him. We hope that, with his outstanding abilities and diplomatic wisdom, he will continue to move the Middle East peace process forward to further progress.

Compared to the situation of four months ago, recent developments in the Israeli-Palestinian situation are cause for concern. One year after the International Court of Justice issued its opinion on the question of the separation wall, the Israeli Government has announced that it will accelerate its construction of that wall in East Jerusalem. That contravenes the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace, and it is bound to exacerbate Israeli-Palestinian discord. The matter of Jerusalem's final status should be resolved through peace talks by the parties

concerned on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

China hopes that the Israeli and Palestinian sides will jointly maintain the good atmosphere that has emerged this year in the situation in the Middle East, and continue their efforts towards reconciliation.

China expresses its concern about the recent escalation of violent clashes between Israelis and Palestinians. That situation underscores the importance and urgency of ensuring security and ending violence. We have noted that Mr. Abbas, the Palestinian leader, has gone to the Gaza Strip to bring the situation under control and that the Israeli side has postponed military action against Gaza. We hope that both sides will maintain the greatest restraint and restore the tranquillity that has prevailed in recent months at an early date.

Through Palestinian and Israeli efforts and the mediation of the international community, there has been an easing of tensions this year, which has been rare in the past four years. It is generally felt that 2005 is a year of opportunity. But the onset of opportunities and the fulfilment of hopes must be based on mutual trust. Any slight slackening of caution on either side will not only disrupt the good atmosphere, it will also seriously impede the peace process.

I once again appeal to both sides to display political courage and wisdom, to remain on the path of peace talks, carry out their obligations under the road map for peace in the Middle East and, eventually, achieve the peaceful co-existence of two independent States.

The attainment of Israeli-Palestinian peace is inextricably linked to effective support from the international community. Along with the international community, China will follow the situation closely and make tireless efforts to move the Middle East towards the earliest possible establishment of peace and stability. As an important body in the area of the maintenance of international peace and stability, the Security Council should also play an effective role in that regard.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): Let me first thank Ambassador De Soto for his first briefing since his appointment as Special Coordinator. We have high expectations for his work as we approach the start of Israel's disengagement from Gaza and part of the West Bank. We look forward to Mr. De Soto's prudent handling of that process.

While we welcome the start of the disengagement from Gaza and appreciate the Israeli Government's firm determination to implement the withdrawal despite some domestic opposition, we must express our concerns over the recent resumption of violence by militant Palestinian groups and the Israeli army. Such violence threatens the continuation of the *tahadiya*. In those circumstances, it is important that President Abbas exercise strong leadership to ensure self-restraint on the part of the Palestinian groups concerned. We appreciate that Palestinian groups, including Hamas, have confirmed their continued observation of the *tahadiya*. Israel and the international community should provide effective support for President Abbas.

The essential point in this connection is that the withdrawal should be conducted undisturbed and should make it possible to open the way for the resumption of the road map's implementation. For that to happen, it is critically important that the two parties make the utmost effort and that, at the same time, the international donor community provide financial and other support for that effort, including financial support from Arab countries.

Vigorous efforts are needed on the Palestinian side to bring about drastic improvement in security measures. For the Palestinian Authority, the challenge is to reduce and stop violence. That is important not merely for a successful disengagement from Gaza or for the promotion of peace with Israel, but also, in a more fundamental sense, as proof that the Authority has the basic capability necessary to function as a State. We therefore support the reform policy pursued by President Abbas, just as we also support the efforts made by General Ward in that area.

Japan supports the coordination efforts made by Mr. Wolfensohn to secure trade and communications routes, including easing restrictions on movement and the construction of a safe passageway. We expect that Israel will adopt a more flexible attitude that will ensure the safety of movement of the Palestinian people and of goods with greater efficiency.

Japan has sought to play an active and constructive role to promote peace in the Middle. As part of those efforts, my Government invited Prime Minister Sharon and President Abbas to Japan.

President Abbas made his visit last May. On that occasion, a new assistance programme for Palestinians amounting to $100 million was announced to facilitate disengagement and rehabilitation in Gaza and the West Bank. That programme will be implemented as soon as possible. That was followed by the visit to Israel and Palestine of our special envoy for the Middle East, Ambassador Arima, to underscore that the success of the disengagement from Gaza was a prerequisite for the revitalization of the road map. Japan will continue its active engagement in the area of economic assistance, and for the advancement of the peace process, including through further emergency relief for the Palestinian people in Gaza and the northern West Bank and through mid-term and long-term assistance for the sustainability of the Palestinian economy.

Concerning the issue of the wall, we saw a positive development in February of this year, when a considerable part of the wall's path in the southern area was rerouted from a course running inside the Green Line to one coinciding with the Green Line. However, construction of the wall inside the Green Line continues at other locations. With regard to this issue, we have maintained the view that, first, the lives of a large number of innocent Israelis have been lost through Palestinian terrorist acts, and that the Palestinian Authority must make the utmost effort to suppress terrorism.

Secondly, the construction of the wall inside the Green Line — which the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice determined to be contrary to international law — is adversely affecting the livelihood of Palestinians and is prejudicial to the outcome of the final status negotiations. It must therefore be stopped. It is to be deplored that the construction of the wall inside the Green Line is continuing. We are especially concerned about the construction of the wall in the area of East Jerusalem, which is taking place at the very moment when heightened caution is required for the success of the withdrawal from Gaza. That construction is also taking place in an area that is considered one of the most sensitive in the final status negotiations and that has a large number of people who will be adversely affected.

We believe that the resolution of the issue of the wall and that of settlements is possible only through the process of the steady implementation of the road map. That is yet another reason why it is so important for the two parties to make disengagement from Gaza a success and to allow that success to flow on to re-energizing the process of implementing the road map. Japan stands ready to offer its support to the two parties to implement the road map and realize the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace.

Japan welcomes the formation of the Siniora Government in Lebanon on 19 July. As Lebanon faces many difficult challenges that will require delicate handling, we hope that Prime Minister Siniora and his Government will be able to exert leadership and set about addressing the many problems at hand as soon as possible.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I would like to fully associate Denmark with the statement of the European Union to be made shortly by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom.

First of all, let me thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, for his thorough briefing and insightful observations.

Denmark has continuously been of the view that Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and the northern West Bank, if successfully implemented, can be an initial stage towards achieving a fair, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. In order for it to be a success, it must be consistent with the road map, it must be complete, and it must be coordinated with the Palestinians as well as with the international community. Therefore, Denmark strongly urges that all efforts be focused on making the disengagement successful.

In that regard, we are encouraged by the political courage shown by the leaders of the two sides. We hope that, with only one month to go, coordination between Israel and the Palestinians will be intensified, especially with regard to such key issues as access to and from Gaza. Moreover, Denmark encourages the Palestinian Authority to accelerate reforms and Israel to put in place the conditions essential to a viable Palestinian economy. Denmark is of the view that the Quartet and its Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, James Wolfensohn, deserve all possible support from the international community.

Denmark has noted the ongoing contacts, including at a high level, between Israel and the

Palestinian Authority. It is essential to progress that such contacts improve both in substance and frequency and take place at all levels. Moreover, it is of great importance that both parties renew their efforts to implement the commitments made in Sharm el-Sheikh and that they refrain from taking unilateral measures that might prejudice the outcome of negotiations on the final settlement. In that context, Denmark remains concerned about the continued construction of the separation barrier on Palestinian land, which is contrary to the relevant provisions of international law.

In that light, I would like to reiterate that Denmark will not recognize any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties. Denmark is of the view that the way to achieve a permanent peace is a viable two-State solution achieved through the full implementation by both parties of their commitments under the road map.

Denmark is very concerned about the recent escalation of violence in Israel and the occupied territories. We have condemned in no uncertain terms the recent terrorist attacks on Israel, as well as the violence by Palestinian militants against Palestinian security personnel. While we recognize Israel's right to protect its citizens, we are against extrajudicial killings, which are contrary to international law.

In order to avoid a return to the cycle of violence that has characterized recent years, Denmark urges Israel to exercise maximum self-restraint and the Palestinian Authority to take immediate and effective action against those involved in the attacks.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): Allow me to say first that, as an acceding country to the European Union, Romania aligns itself with the statement to be made shortly on behalf of the Union by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom. My remarks will therefore be brief.

Before anything else, I wish to join other speakers in welcoming the presence of Ambassador Alvaro de Soto in the Council for the first time since his assumption of his new assignment as United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. Being well aware of his vast experience, my delegation is fully confident in Ambassador De Soto's ability to successfully discharge the new important and challenging mandate entrusted to him. We extend our gratitude for the comprehensive and in-depth presentation he has just offered to the Council.

Sadly, over the past weeks, acts of violence between Israelis and Palestinians have once again multiplied and escalated. People have died and suffered on both sides. Terror has struck again and claimed innocent lives. Israelis and Palestinians should spare no effort in advancing together towards the realization of the two-State vision. That can be achieved only if the parties proceed without delay to the full implementation of their obligations under the road map. Taking effective action against terrorism and dismantling the associated infrastructure should be top priorities for the Palestinians. To that end, they must pursue and accelerate the reform of their security services, taking full advantage of assistance provided by the international community.

Correspondingly, Israel must cease its settlement activities, which are contrary to its obligations under the road map, and avoid taking measures that could prejudge the final result of negotiations, especially with regard to territorial issues, including those in connection with Jerusalem. From that point of view, the construction of the barrier remains of great concern. While undoubtedly playing an effective role in protecting Israeli land and nationals, the erection of the barrier inside the Palestinian territories cannot be regarded as being in compliance with the relevant provisions of international law.

The Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the West Bank, which will start soon, is a courageous move and we once again commend the Israeli leadership for its resolve in overcoming all obstacles to that plan. Its successful implementation will provide a good opportunity to ease the burden of unsettled issues in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and therefore serve the general purpose of advancing towards peace. For that to happen, the parties concerned must cooperate and coordinate closely before, during and after the disengagement, especially with the aim of creating the conditions necessary for post-withdrawal economic recovery in Gaza.

Dialogue is the essential ingredient in reaching any political objective. We encourage leaders on both sides to continue to pursue their contacts and broaden the agenda of the meetings taking place at various levels. The final goal should be the resumption of peace talks in order to reach, through negotiations and in accordance with the provisions of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the conflict in

the Middle East. Romania is actively involved in the pursuit of that agenda for peace, as shown by the outcomes of the recent visit Foreign Minister Ungureanu made to Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Concerning other developments in the region, namely in Lebanon, the full implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) is a prerequisite for enabling Lebanon to fulfil its longstanding aspiration to full political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We call upon all parties concerned to cooperate fully in that process and, inter alia, to support the activity of the independent international investigation commission looking into the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Mr. President, I should like to thank you for convening today's open debate to discuss this important item at the request of the countries members of the League of Arab States. At the same time, I should like to thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, for his excellent presentation today and to congratulate him on the work he has done so far in carrying out his difficult mission.

In our view, recent developments are a further indication of the extreme fragility of the situation in the Middle East, in particular in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian track. Unfortunately, after some months of relative calm, the level of violence has increased significantly, mainly affecting the civilian population on both sides. The new wave of violence jeopardizes the achievements of recent months and could greatly erode trust between the parties. For that reason, we believe that the seriousness of the situation must not be underestimated either by the international community at large or by the Security Council.

Argentina strongly condemns all recent terrorist acts that resulted in the death of innocent civilians. In particular, I should like to state our unequivocal condemnation of the suicide bombing that took place on 12 July in the city of Netanya and of the Qassem rocket attacks fired from the Gaza Strip. All of those acts are unjustifiable. We would recall that the Palestinian Authority has the obligation to take decisive measures against terrorist groups and to prevent the territory under its control from being used as a base for attacks against the population of Israel. We are aware of the challenges faced by the Palestinian Authority in this field, and we welcome the recent efforts made by President Mahmoud Abbas. However, we believe that those efforts should be strengthened to send a clear message to Palestinian extremist groups that violence cannot be accepted or tolerated.

Israel has the legitimate right to defend itself against such attacks, but it must be exercised in conformity with the principle of proportionality and must, despite all the difficulties in this regard, be in accordance with international law. Accordingly, we request that the practice of targeted killings not be resumed and that the human rights of the Palestinian population and humanitarian law be respected at all times.

As we have said, we believe that Israel should act in conformity with international law in respect of the construction of the separation barrier and settlement activities. My country has previously expressed its opposition to the construction of the separation barrier in the occupied Palestinian territories. Today, we reiterate that position and call on the Israeli Government to comply with the July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and with General Assembly resolution ES-10/15.

The 9 July decision of the Israeli Cabinet to accelerate the construction of the barrier in East Jerusalem is manifestly contrary to the reiterated calls of the international community; we believe it should be revised, and we call on the Government of Israel to do so. Likewise, we believe that all settlement activities should cease and that settlement outposts should be dismantled in accordance with the road map.

In spite of the negative developments we have described, we believe that the sole option for Israel and for Palestine is a future of peaceful coexistence, with both of them living side by side in peace and security. In that regard, we consider that plans to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank should go forward as a first step towards putting an end to the occupation that began in 1967. The commitment of both sides to cooperate in the implementation of that initiative is essential, as is the active participation and assistance of the international community. Less than a month before the withdrawal begins, all efforts should be concentrated on its successful completion. The parties should therefore refrain from taking measures that could undermine the initiative. Here, we

congratulate Prime Minister Sharon and the Israeli Knesset on their continued firm position in that regard.

With regard to the situation in the region in general, we welcome the recent formation of a new Government in Lebanon as a consequence of the elections that concluded a month ago. We congratulate Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and the members of his Cabinet on their appointment. We hope that the formation of the new Government will help to stabilize the situation in that country, thus allowing the people of Lebanon to live free of violence and intimidation. Likewise, we hope that such progress in the political process will contribute to the implementation of the outstanding provisions of Security Council resolutions related to the situation in Lebanon. In addition, I wish to reiterate our condemnation of the repeated violations of the Blue Line and our call upon the parties to cease such violations and respect the Line in its entirety.

I wish in conclusion to reaffirm my country's commitment to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on resolutions adopted by the Security Council.

Mr. Brencick (United States of America): My delegation thanks Special Coordinator Alvaro de Soto for his informative briefing and wishes him every success in his challenging new mission.

The United States reiterates its serious concerns regarding the challenges faced by the international community and by the parties in bringing about a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic Middle East.

With respect to the Israeli-Palestinian situation, it has been three years since President Bush put forward his vision of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Since then, a strong international consensus has developed behind that vision and behind the road map for peace designed to achieve that vision. Both parties have clear obligations under that roadmap. Progress on the road map and moving towards that vision of two States living in peace and security cannot be achieved by rhetoric and blame. Right now, the focus of our efforts, as well as those of the international community, should be on working towards the successful implementation of the Gaza disengagement plan.

United States Security Coordinator William Ward has been on the ground since 9 March to assist in reforming the security services and to coordinate international assistance in the area. The Quartet's Special Envoy, James Wolfensohn, has identified six short-term and three longer-term challenges to economic recovery and is working closely with the parties on those issues. Overall, progress has been made, but much work needs to be done to ensure that this complex operation is a success.

Disengagement holds the potential to reinvigorate the road map and to realize genuine progress towards peace. We believe that the road map and existing mechanisms, including the Quartet, are the best avenues for moving the parties forward. Everyone here supports the road map, and the Council has specifically endorsed it.

A central challenge to be addressed between now and mid-August remains improving the security situation and creating conditions that will be conducive to the success of the disengagement plan. President Abbas has taken some concrete steps towards security reform, which we encourage. He has made clear that he will hold his security chiefs accountable for their performance in halting attacks on Israelis. However, overall Palestinian performance in confronting terrorism has been far from satisfactory, and this must remain an area of concern for us.

Turning to the situation in Lebanon, we urge the new Lebanese Government to move towards full implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), including militia disarmament. Our position on Hizbullah has not changed. It is a designated foreign terrorist organization and cannot play a role as a legitimate political actor until it renounces violence and disarms. The recent violent events initiated by Hizbullah along the Blue Line on 29 June and 12 July underscore the danger that this militia poses to international peace and security.

We are also deeply concerned about Syria's closure of its border with Lebanon. Although we welcome legitimate efforts to interdict illicit trade and the movement of terrorists and their assets, the severity of that effort clearly illustrates an ulterior motive on the part of the Syrians. This is clearly an attempt by the Syrian Government to strangle the economy of Lebanon by impeding trade across their border, which is Lebanon's gateway to the rest of the Arab world and a means of continuing to interfere in Lebanese affairs.

The situation underscores the need for the two Governments to establish normal and sovereign

relations between themselves in order to resolve problems such as this. At the same time, this is an issue that is affecting Lebanon's trade with other Arab nations, and we would expect that they would also make their views known to the Lebanese and Syrian Governments.

This is yet another example of Syria interfering in Lebanon. The Syrian Government is signalling, not only to the Lebanese but to the rest of the world, that it is still trying to call the shots there.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I have the honour also to speak on behalf of the European Union. In addition, the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Turkey and Croatia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries Iceland and Liechtenstein members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

I, too, am grateful to Mr. Alvaro de Soto for his briefing. I wish him every success in his new role.

European Union (EU) ministers, on 18 July, recalled and stressed the global strategic importance of peace, stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean and the European commitment to the resolution of the Middle East conflict. The European Union supports the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank as an initial stage towards achieving a fair, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

On behalf of the Union, High Representative Javier Solana visited the region from 10 to 14 July. There he re-emphasized the European Union's commitment to keeping both parties engaged in the peace process and in the implementation of the road map, and, furthermore, to ensure that EU action should be coherent, focussed and coordinated with the Quartet and the international community.

On security, the European Union is gravely concerned at the recent escalation in violence in Israel and the occupied territories and has condemned unreservedly the recent terrorist attacks on Israel that have resulted in a number of Israeli fatalities and injuries. We have also condemned violence by Palestinian militants against Palestinian security personnel.

While having repeatedly condemned terrorist atrocities against Israelis, and recognizing Israel's right to protect its citizens against terrorist attacks, the European Union has consistently opposed extrajudicial killings, which are contrary to international law. The European Union emphasizes that Palestinians and Israelis must not return to the cycle of violence that has been characteristic of recent years. We urge Israel to exercise maximum self-restraint and the Palestinian Authority to take immediate and effective action against those involved in attacks.

We commend the political courage shown by the leaders of the two sides with regard to the withdrawal from Gaza and certain parts of the northern West Bank. A successful disengagement is vital, and only one month remains before it is scheduled to start. EU ministers have therefore reaffirmed the need for both parties to the conflict to make every effort to take advantage of the opportunity presented by disengagement and, furthermore, urge Israel to ensure that withdrawal is complete and coordinated with the Palestinians and the international community. We call for intensified coordination between Israel and the Palestinians, which is central to achieving tangible results, especially with regard to the crucial issues of access to and from the Gaza Strip.

The European Union fully supports the Quartet and its Special Envoy for Disengagement, James Wolfensohn, and his mission. The Union is determined to work in close cooperation with him to ensure the success of disengagement, and we urge the international community, including Arab States, to do likewise. The EU has emphasized the urgent need for Israel and the Palestinian Authority to cooperate effectively with one another and with Mr. Wolfensohn in order to support Palestinian institutional and economic development. It wants the Palestinian Authority to accelerate reforms and Israel to put in place the conditions essential to viable Palestinian economic growth.

While noting the ongoing contacts between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, including the meeting between the Israeli Prime Minister and the Palestinian President on 21 June in Jerusalem, we want such contacts to improve in both substance and frequency and to take place at all levels. Both sides should renew

their efforts to implement the commitments made at Sharm el-Sheikh and avoid any action likely to undermine mutual confidence. Crucially, no party should take unilateral measures which might prejudice the outcome of negotiations on the final settlement. In that context, the European Union is concerned about the recent Israeli Cabinet decision to complete immediately the separation barrier in and around East Jerusalem.

On law and order, the European Union has urged the Palestinian Authority to step up its efforts to ensure a secure environment in which its citizens' own needs for law and order are met. We are committed to contributing to the development of Palestinian security capacity through the Palestinian civil police, in coordination with United States Security Coordinator General Ward.

On final status issues, EU ministers on 18 July recalled that the Union will not recognize any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties. We continue to believe that the way to achieve a permanent peace is a viable two-State solution, achieved through the full implementation by both parties of their commitments under the road map.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the European Union's position regarding the Israeli separation barrier. While the European Union recognizes the right of Israel to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks, it has demanded that Israel stop and reverse the construction of the barrier inside the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, which is in contradiction to the relevant provisions of international law.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks you, Mr. President, for having convened this open meeting of the Security Council to allow us to consider developments in the situation in the Middle East, including Palestine.

We thank Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his excellent briefing to the Council. We commend the efforts of the international community, particularly the Quartet, to ensure that the disengagement proceeds in a coordinated manner. We welcome the Knesset's decision to oppose any postponement of that disengagement.

In that context, we express our support for the mission entrusted to two special envoys for the disengagement: General Ward, responsible for helping the Palestinian Authority set up appropriate structures for reforming the security apparatus, and Mr. James Wolfensohn, responsible for issues that do not concern security. We welcome the Secretary-General's decision to ensure that Mr. Wolfensohn has all the assistance he needs to establish an office in Jerusalem so that he can carry out his mandate.

Those efforts by the Quartet clearly demonstrate the will of the international community to assist in the implementation of the disengagement, which is considered to be a stage of the implementation of the road map approved in resolution 1515 (2003) as a framework for the final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the end of the occupation.

It is regrettable that those efforts are now being thwarted by the renewed outbreak of violence in Gaza with the approach of the occupying Power's disengagement, which is to take place in August. My delegation is following this new crisis with great concern; it has already forced the Palestinian Authority to declare a state of emergency in the occupied territories.

However, the agreements reached at the Sharm el-Sheikh summit allowed us to hope that the weapons would fall silent, which would permit the resumption of a frank dialogue between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority with a view to the implementation of the disengagement plan. It is essential to reverse this negative trend, which can only compromise the outcome of the operation, given the real risk of worsening tensions in view of the actions of the forces of the occupying Power and of the Palestinian resistance.

In that regard, we do not understand the obstacles that continue to hinder freedom of movement and circulation in the occupied territories. We also deplore the continued destruction of Palestinian property in the occupied territories and the resumption of the practice of the extrajudicial killing of Palestinian militants, in flagrant violation of the commitments undertaken at Sharm el-Sheikh. We call upon the occupying Power to put an end to that practice. For its part, the Palestinian Authority must take all appropriate measures to prevent attacks targeting Israeli civilian populations.

The continued construction of the wall of separation despite the decision of the International Court of Justice constitutes a real challenge for the international community. We urge the Government of Israel to substantially implement the Court's decision, particularly with regard to halting the construction, dismantling the wall and returning property confiscated in that connection.

We are also concerned by the continued construction of settlements in the occupied territories. Ending the construction and dismantling those settlements are obligations under the road map, which is and remains the indisputable point of reference for carrying out the peace process. Here, we express our attachment to the main objective of the peace process: the creation of a Palestinian State existing side by side with Israel within fixed and internationally recognized borders.

Disengagement from Gaza would be a decisive step in that direction. We urge all the parties involved to do their utmost to ensure the success of the process now under way in order to open up new prospects for the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Given the central nature of this conflict, all progress on the ground will have positive repercussions on the whole range of situations that affect the region's stability.

Mr. Mercado (Philippines): We welcome Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and thank him for his first briefing to the Council on the latest developments in the region, particularly the recent outbreak of violence that not only claimed the lives of several people and wounded several dozens more, but also left a tenuous ceasefire in tatters.

It has been nine days since a Palestinian militant slipped into the city of Netanya, blew himself up, together with five Israelis, and scarred 30 others for the rest of their lives. That tragedy, which we all wish had not happened, plunged the region into another bloody episode in a war that seems to have no end. The Philippines condemns the suicide bombing in Netanya and the resulting cycle of violence and counter-violence, from the assassination by Israel of suspected militants to the torrent of death and destruction unleashed by Palestinian extremists, which shattered the fragile truce that the international community has been trying to keep in place since February.

The Philippines recognizes Israel's right to legitimate self-defence as a result of the latest suicide bomb set off inside its territory, but we strongly feel that that should not be seen as a licence for Israel to take extrajudicial actions. We join others in deploring this Israeli reaction. In the same way, we abhor the retaliatory action of militants who were responsible not only for launching rockets and mortars against Israeli targets, but also for setting off what has been described as the worst factional fighting in northern Gaza in years.

The ceasefire needs to be put back in place, and it must hold if we want the peace process to move forward. We call on both parties to abide by the agreements reached at Sharm el-Sheikh. The Philippines also calls on Israel and Palestinian militants to salvage the truce by exercising restraint and by refraining from taking further action that could jeopardize the efforts of the Palestinian Authority to enforce the rule of law and maintain peace and stability in the area.

We commend President Mahmoud Abbas for asserting his authority by ordering Palestinian security forces to prevent militants from launching further rocket and mortar attacks against Israel. Having been in office for a little more than six months, President Abbas should be encouraged and given the time and the support he needs to consolidate his authority and to pursue reforms in his Government. We continue to place our trust and confidence in President Abbas as a key partner in the international community's efforts to find a meaningful and comprehensive solution to the conflict.

We also join others in welcoming the efforts of the Quartet's special envoy, James Wolfensohn, to address the dire economic and humanitarian situation in the occupied territories. In addition, we commend Egypt for facilitating the agreement between Fatah and Hamas that ended several days of street fighting between Palestinian security forces and rival factions. Such fighting has complicated the efforts to bring peace to the region.

While we welcome Israel's planned disengagement from Gaza and parts of the West Bank, that disengagement must be full and complete if it is to contribute positively to our search for a permanent solution to the Palestinian question. At the same time, we call on Israel to help bring the peace process

forward by halting its settlement expansion activities, particularly in Maaleh Adumim, in compliance with its commitments under the road map.

We also join others in urging Israel to stop the construction of its separation wall, as called for by the international community in General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and the 9 July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of Greece.

We give many thanks to Mr. Alvaro de Soto, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his comprehensive and useful briefing on the latest developments in the Middle East.

Greece fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union.

Today's open debate comes at a most critical juncture on the long and difficult road towards achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

Over the past few months, we have witnessed a strong and solid commitment by both sides. Their respective leaderships have taken bold decisions, often at great political cost, to move the process forward. They have resisted sizeable internal pressures. On numerous occasions they have publicly declared that they will honour and proceed with the commitments they have undertaken. That is to be commended.

The upcoming Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank, when completed, will indeed constitute an important milestone. It should be seized upon as a momentous opportunity to revitalize the road map and to move the process a step closer towards achieving a fair, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The success of Israeli disengagement is of paramount importance. All parties have an important stake in it. We are well aware that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed immediately and that need to be resolved in a manner that ensures a positive and successful outcome.

Both sides should make every effort to work directly with each other and to cooperate in finding the optimum solutions to the various issues involved in a coordinated, peaceful and smooth handover. Contacts between the two sides at all levels should be intensified and should be operational and forward-looking. Greece fully supports the mission of the Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, Mr. James Wolfensohn, and his efforts to assist in the non-security-related aspects of the disengagement and in the revival of the Palestinian economy.

The Israeli disengagement will be judged over the long term. Thus, provisions for the day after disengagement should be put in place. The viability of a successful disengagement should be consolidated by developing the necessary conditions — political, economic and security — to ensure, to the extent possible, that there will not be a reversal of the progress that will have been achieved.

The economic revival of the Palestinian territories will be crucial to ensuring long-term benefits arising from the opportunity presented by the Israeli disengagement. All efforts in that direction should be supported and enhanced. Initiatives such as the 1 March London meeting on supporting the Palestinian Authority must include the appropriate follow-up.

Notwithstanding Israel's legitimate security concerns, immediate steps must be taken to relieve the economic hardships faced by the Palestinian people and to facilitate rehabilitation and reconstruction by easing the flow of people and goods in and out of Gaza and the West Bank and between them.

Although our attention is focused on the upcoming Israeli withdrawal, we must not lose sight of the wider context. Our shared goal is the realization of a two-State solution: Israel and a democratic, viable and territorially contiguous State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

We are concerned at the recent upsurge of violence, which has threatened to upset the delicate truce of the past few months. As tensions are running high, it is necessary that both parties do their utmost to curb attacks and counterattacks, including extrajudicial killings, in order to prevent a return to the vicious circle of violence that has beset the region for so long.

Therefore, confidence-building between the parties is a key aspect. Greece would like to recall the understandings reached at the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit on 8 February and encourages both sides to proceed

without delay with the implementation of those understandings.

We are also concerned at continued Israeli settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories and at the continued construction of the separation barrier, as well as the Israeli cabinet's decision to immediately complete its construction in and around East Jerusalem, with apparent dire humanitarian consequences for a large number of the city's Arab inhabitants.

It is important to reiterate that the road map remains the framework for the achievement of just and lasting peace. Both parties should concentrate on fulfilling their respective obligations and commitments under the road map. They should also refrain from any and all unilateral actions that threaten to prejudge the outcome of final status negotiations and that undermine efforts to build confidence on the ground.

The role of the international community, the Quartet in particular, remains extremely important in that it has to be actively involved and engaged in supporting the parties in their efforts to realize and implement their respective commitments.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are a number of speakers remaining on my list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I intend to suspend the meeting until 2.50 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5230/Corr.1

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5230th meeting

Thursday, 21 July 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

Corrigendum

Page 3, first column, after The President:

In the letter read aloud by the President, the name of the representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for whom an invitation is requested should read: Mr. Syed Shahid Husain, Senior Adviser of the Permanent Observer Mission of the OIC.

In the antepenultimate paragraph, replace the name of the invitee with Mr. Syed Shahid Husain, and in the italicized line at the bottom of the page replace the name with Mr. Husain.

In the tenth and eleventh lines of the letter read aloud by the President, *for* including the Palestinian question, *read* including East Jerusalem,

05-44022 (E)

United Nations S/PV.5230 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5230th meeting

Thursday, 21 July 2005, 2.50 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Djacta
	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Da Silva
	China	Mr. Xie Yunliang
	Denmark	Mr. Christensen
	France	Mr. Loras
	Japan	Mr. Matsuura
	Philippines	Mr. Cato
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Smirnov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Brooker
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Salaita
	United States of America	Mr. Nelson

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 19 July 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2005/469)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-43428 (E)

The meeting resumed at 3 p.m.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco and Pakistan, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes, in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts of their statements in writing and to deliver condensed versions when speaking in the Chamber.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kuwait, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Al-Najem (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Group of Arab States, over which my delegation has the honour to preside this month, I have the honour to convey to you, Sir, our congratulations on your friendly country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to commend your predecessor, the representative of France, for the excellent manner in which he presided over the work of the Council. We also congratulate Mr. Alvaro de Soto on his appointment as United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

I would also like to thank the Security Council for its timely response in convening this meeting to discuss recent developments in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. I refer in particular to the ongoing and accelerating illegal settlement activities conducted by Israel, the construction of the illegal separation wall, and the deteriorating situation on the ground.

I wish to condemn the acts of terrorism that occurred in London this morning. We wish the victims a speedy recovery. We condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and call for international efforts to counter it.

The Arab countries are following with grave concern the latest developments in the occupied Palestinian territories and recall the understandings that were reached in Sharm el-Sheikh in February, which call for the rejection of violence. We also follow with grave concern the tragic situation of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories as their standards of living and their economic and social life continue to deteriorate as a result of Israel's policies and practices, which run counter to international laws and norms and humanitarian law. We are deeply disturbed by the detentions and the use of live ammunition against unarmed civilians, the blockade of Palestinian cities, the restrictions on freedom of movement, and the political assassinations of Palestinian leaders. Such violations by the Israeli occupation forces are carried out brazenly under the eyes of the world with no concern for accountability or international opinion.

The destruction of property and the confiscation of Palestinian territory continue in direct relation to the ongoing construction by Israel of its illegal expansionist wall in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem and surrounding areas. That continued construction represents a blatant violation of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, and a lack of respect for the advisory opinion delivered by the International Court of Justice on 9 July 2004, as noted in General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004.

The Arab position regarding Israel's construction of the wall in the Palestinian territories is unambiguous and has been reiterated on many occasions before the General Assembly, the Security Council and other international forums. It is based on the firm conviction that the practices and policies of the Israeli Government in the occupied Arab territories, whereby it violates international law and the resolutions of international legitimacy, offer no sense whatsoever of a real or sincere desire for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. The date of 9 July 2005 is the first anniversary of the handing down of the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion, but despite that

opinion and resolution ES-10/15, which was adopted by a majority of the Member States and calls on Israel to fulfil all the legal obligations laid down in that opinion, Israel has only accelerated its construction of the expansionist wall, further aggravating the situation and confiscating ever more Palestinian land.

The Israeli Government has declared 1 September as the deadline for the completion of the expansionist wall, which now extends 750 kilometres inside the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, cutting off 65,000 Palestinian residents of Jerusalem from contact with their families and jobs.

Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip must be complete and based on the road map. It should be followed by a withdrawal from the other occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. The withdrawal from Gaza and certain settlements of the West Bank must be undertaken in coordination with the Palestinian Authority; it should advance the peace process and put an end to the suffering of the occupied Palestinian people. We appreciate the efforts of the Quartet in that regard.

The Arab countries call on the international community to assume its responsibilities and appeals to all States Members of the United Nations to adopt a clear and unambiguous position to strengthen the Charter and international law, including international humanitarian law, and to compel Israel to respect international legitimacy and to put and end to all its illegal practices against the Palestinian people, including the ongoing construction of the separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. It must desist from those policies, which can only exacerbate the insecurity in the region. The Israeli Government should know that its policies and procedures, designed to extend the occupation, will only backfire and cannot bring security.

The only way to establish security for all is to find a peaceful, comprehensive and just settlement based on the resolutions of international legitimacy, notably Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), the principle of land for peace, the Madrid references, and the Arab peace initiative. Israel must fulfil all its obligations as set out in the road map, which was endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1515 (2003). The road map calls for the establishment of two States living side by side in peace and within internationally recognized borders, and consecrates peace in the Middle East in the interests of all its peoples and countries.

The President: I thank the representative of Kuwait for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations. I give the floor to Mr. Yahya Mahmassani.

Mr. Mahmassani (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. We are fully confident that your well-known diplomatic experience and skills will lead to the successful conduct of the Council's business.

I also thank Ambassador Jean-Marc de la Sablière, the Permanent Representative of France, for his successful guidance of the Council's work as its President last month.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Alvaro de Soto on his assumption of his new post and to thank him for his briefing this morning.

The Security Council is meeting today to consider Israel's settlement policy and construction of the separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territories, which represents a threat to regional security and to international peace and security. It also prevents the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East.

It has been a year since the adoption of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which established the illegality of the building of the Israeli separation wall on Palestinian territory and declared the settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories to be equally illegal. It has also been a year since the General Assembly, at its tenth emergency special session, adopted resolution ES-10/15, which also reaffirmed the illegal character of the construction of the wall and its contravention of international law and international humanitarian and human rights law. It called on Israel to stop its violations of those laws, to cease forthwith its construction of the wall and to dismantle the completed sections.

Israel, the occupying Power, continues to defy the will of the international community, in grave violation of international law and human rights. It continues to

build the wall and to occupy the Palestinian territories, exploiting the diversion of the Security Council's attention to the withdrawal from Gaza. The footprint of the wall is designed to ensure the confiscation of even more of the occupied Palestinian territories in which to build Israeli settlements.

Israel's claim that the separation wall is a temporary measure taken in response to security and military requirements is misleading and unacceptable. Its goal in constructing the wall and in building the settlements is to take over Palestinian territories, put an end to geographical contiguity between the Palestinian people, and prevent the establishment of a viable Palestinian State.

The core of the Arab-Israeli conflict is Israel's continued occupation of Arab territories. All of Israel's attempts to impose by force a solution to the conflict have failed. The only way to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East is through negotiations between the parties concerned on the basis of internationally binding resolutions.

The Security Council must today shoulder its responsibility to compel Israel to stop the construction of the wall, put and end to its settlement policy and sit at the negotiating table with the Palestinian Authority, with the goal of beginning implementation of the road map and the withdrawal from Gaza, as a first step towards complete withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian territories and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within the borders of 4 June 1967.

Withdrawal from Gaza cannot be an end in itself, as the Israeli side claims it to be. It is but a first step towards implementing all of the obligations of both parties to end the conflict and establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

Because of its attempts to shirk its responsibilities under the Quartet agreement, Israel is fully responsible for the deterioration in the relations between Palestinians and Israelis.

In that regard, an editorial that appeared in *The New York Times* of 15 July 2005 stated the following:

> "Sadly, most of the blame for the current paralysis lies with Mr. Sharon ... Mr. Sharon appears to have become so fixated on making the withdrawal appear palatable to the Israeli right that he has lost sight of the larger strategic calculus of building peace. He wants to advertise the pull-back as a unilateral Israeli measure, undertaken for Israel's own reasons, and not as part of any larger negotiated deal with the Palestinians".

We hope that peace will prevail in the Middle East, and, in accordance with the resolution adopted at the Beirut summit, we call on the Security Council to revitalize the peace process on the basis of internationally binding resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the Arab peace initiative.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Aboul Atta (Egypt) *(spoke in Arabic)*: The Security Council is meeting today, one year after the publication of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory. That advisory opinion has gained increasing international support, not only because it was issued by the highest judicial body but also because of its moral and political significance with regard to the importance of abiding by international legitimacy.

We are also meeting here today to consider the report submitted by Switzerland, in its capacity as the depositary of the Fourth Geneva Convention, with regard to the issue of respect for that Convention in the occupied territories. It has stated that the changes made by Israel to the track of the wall are still insufficient from a legal perspective and that they do not meet the conditions set out in the Court's advisory opinion. The situation has also given rise to concern within the international community with respect to the humanitarian, social and economic consequences that the wall entails for the Palestinian people. The suffering that the Israeli occupation was already causing to the friendly and brotherly people of Palestine has been doubled. We see rampant unemployment, as well as an increase in the number of checkpoints, which prevents food aid from arriving at its destination. Thus material obstacles are placed in the way of international efforts aimed at improving the social and economic situation of the Palestinian people, preventing them from living in circumstances that meet minimum international human rights requirements.

Israel must at the earliest possible time stop building the wall, dismantle what has already been

built and provide the necessary compensation and damages, in accordance with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. But, even though the wall is illegal, the Israeli Government decided a few days ago to build it around Jerusalem by next September. That plan will isolate thousands of Palestinian people from their properties and land and from hospitals and schools in East Jerusalem. That will adversely affect the final status negotiations by imposing de facto conditions that run counter to all international norms, thereby dashing Palestinians' last hopes for an independent and sovereign State.

Israel has taken a unilateral decision to withdraw from Gaza and some of the settlements in the West Bank. That could signal a larger withdrawal that would allow the Palestinian people to start building their future State. The chance to create a positive environment there must not be destroyed by the continued construction of the separation wall and its extension to areas that are considered holy sites, stirring up emotions that could lead to the continuation of violence and counter-violence.

The Sharm el-Sheikh summit held last February reaffirmed one of the pillars of the new phase of the direct Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. In that phase, the Israeli Government said, the disengagement plan will continue. Coordination and collaboration between the Israeli and Palestinian sides must also continue in order for such a plan to be successful.

In that context, Egypt reiterates that the balanced and proper implementation of the agreements reached at Sharm el-Sheikh is one of the principal guarantees of continued Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank.

Egypt will continue to make every effort to work with both the Israeli and Palestinian sides to ensure that the Palestinian Authority has the necessary level of control in Gaza. In addition, it has provided security forces, sent high-level envoys in recent days, and provided also the necessary training to the Authority, in accordance with the plan to create the infrastructure needed to bring about peace and security. Egypt will continue to work at all levels to ensure that the Middle East becomes a region of peace, security and stability.

The Security Council must send a strong message today reiterating the fact that achieving peace requires implementing the decisions of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, abiding by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and dismantling the separation wall, in order to alleviate the day-to-day suffering of the Palestinian people. It must request that Israel, the occupying Power, abide by all the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Both sides must work together in order for the Israeli withdrawal to be successful, in keeping with the road map and as a preliminary phase to further withdrawals, and in order to begin final status negotiations so as to arrive at a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement, in accordance with the approach set out by the road map and adopted by the Security Council.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Yemen, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. We wish you every success and are confident that, with your well known wisdom and experience, you will guide the work of the Council to a successful conclusion that will strengthen international peace and security. I wish also to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of France, for the wisdom with which he presided over the work of the Council last month.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is deteriorating daily, owing to the intensified building of colonial settlements and the continued construction of the illegal expansionist wall, all of which is intended to annex additional Palestinian lands. This only exacerbates the suffering of the Palestinian people. Many Palestinians have died as a result of Israeli practices, which include extrajudicial killings. The movement of Palestinians and Palestinian goods continues to be limited by the many checkpoints scattered throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. In spite of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings, the Israeli authorities continue their policy of destroying houses and the institutional buildings and agricultural lands that are the basis of the Palestinian people's livelihood. This has given rise to growing unemployment and poverty.

Israel's continued construction of the illegal expansionist wall in the Palestinian territories, including in areas around East Jerusalem, is in clear violation of the principles of international law and the

9 July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. It also runs counter to commitments undertaken by Israel, the occupying Power, and to provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

It is extremely important that Israel's total withdrawal from Gaza be followed by its withdrawal from all the other occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. The Security Council must tell Israel that withdrawal from the Gaza Strip means complete withdrawal both from Palestinian lands and from Palestine's territorial waters, as well as respect for Palestinian airspace, and that it must be followed by negotiations on final status. Moreover, the Israeli withdrawal should not be used as an excuse for continued colonization of the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem; rather, it should be a step towards the implementation of the road map.

I wish in conclusion to stress once again how important it is that the international community and, in particular, the Security Council shoulder their responsibility with regard to the suffering Palestinian people, a nation like all others, which aspires to a life in peace in an independent State on its own national territory, with Jerusalem as its capital, and which seeks full and genuine independence in a viable State in which it can express its Palestinian national identity.

The President: I thank the representative of Yemen for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of South Africa, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa): My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate in response to the renewed violence in the Middle East and the accelerated construction by Israel of settlements and the separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. We align ourselves with the statement that will be delivered by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It is now more than a year since the Security Council last held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East. During that period new possibilities for the resumption of the peace process were brought about by factors such as Israel's decision to withdraw from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank and the reforms initiated by the new Palestinian leadership. For the first time in many years, the level of violence had begun to decrease significantly, offering moderate Israelis and Palestinians an opportunity to seize the initiative back from the extremists on both sides.

Tragically, as we meet today, there are clear signs that the parties and the international community are not taking full advantage of the opportunity for peace. The resumption of terrorist attacks, military incursions, extrajudicial executions and acts of defiance directed against both the Israeli and the Palestinian authorities suggest that recent gains could be rapidly reversed. Unless urgent action is taken in support of the peace process, there is a real danger that the Middle East could once again descend into anarchy.

A year has passed since the International Court of Justice definitively ended the debate on the legality of the Israeli separation wall, forever debunking the myth that the wall is a necessary and legitimate part of the defence against terrorism. The international community endorsed the Court's finding that the wall and its associated regime are unlawful and that Israel, the occupying Power, has the obligation to dismantle the wall, cease further construction activities and make restitution and reparation for the damage brought about by the wall's construction. We also acknowledged the Court's finding that all Member States — and in particular the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention — have a clear responsibility to ensure that the Geneva Conventions and international law are upheld. Finally, we mandated the Secretary-General to set up a register of damage brought about by the construction of the wall. We were guided in those actions by our recognition that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with regard to the question of Palestine until that question is resolved in its entirety on the basis of the Charter, relevant resolutions of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law.

Today, we note with grave concern that Israel has once again chosen to disregard the will of the international community and to continue actions that are both in contravention of international law and incompatible with the realization of a two-State solution to the Middle East crisis. During the past year, Israel pressed ahead with the construction of the wall and settlements, despite the fact that the security situation had dramatically improved. At the same time, the Palestinian Authority, under its new democratically elected and internationally supported leadership, has

redoubled its efforts to bring about reforms. Israel's actions therefore clearly contradict its statement that the wall is a temporary measure necessitated by security considerations.

In fact, on 10 July 2005 the Israeli Cabinet approved yet another extension to the wall, this time around East Jerusalem. When this latest phase of construction is complete, a further 55,000 Palestinians will be cut off from their relatives and from hospitals, schools, shops and places of worship. According to Israel's Minister for Jerusalem, this project would help ensure a Jewish majority in Jerusalem.

The inaction by the international community and the United Nations on the separation wall and on settlements over the past year has had the effect of allowing Israel to solidify its occupation of East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, further altering the demographic facts on the ground. The construction of settlements and the wall and its associated regime has had a grave impact on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people, resulting in the violation of their most basic human rights and exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. Also, our collective failure to provide the Palestinian Authority with adequate assistance to enable it to exert its authority and to establish law and order in the occupied territories has only strengthened the hand of extremists, who feed off the anger of a people living under military occupation. At the same time, the South African Government strongly condemns all acts of terror and violence directed against civilians, such as suicide bombings.

We believe that the time has come to empower the moderates on both sides through our active support. We should also agree that the ongoing construction of settlements and the separation wall, and the associated destruction of Palestinian livelihoods, must not be allowed to continue. Those settlement activities threaten to negate any positive aspects arising from the disengagement process. We therefore reiterate the call for strict compliance with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and for the immediate and full implementation of the Secretary-General's mandate to establish a registry of damages caused by construction of the wall.

We cannot allow the current situation — where one party enjoys more basic rights and freedoms than the other — to continue. There should be equality and protection before the law, and the parties should also respect resolutions of the United Nations and honour their commitments under international agreements. In particular, both sides have a duty to bring an end to all senseless acts of terrorism and violence directed against civilians and to work towards reconciliation and peace.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Tunisia, on whom I call.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset my delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your wise leadership of the Council's work. We thank you and all the members for the prompt response to the request of the Arab Group for a special meeting.

Today the Security Council is looking into the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, at a time when the conditions in those territories are deteriorating because of the Israeli practices that target the Palestinian people. We have seen settlements continue, homes demolished and land appropriated. Work to complete the wall is persisting, and it is even being extended deep into Palestinian territories, in spite of the widespread international condemnation of the wall and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which reiterated the illegality of the wall and the necessity that it be dismantled.

There is no doubt that those Israeli practices — especially the building of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territories, including inside and around East Jerusalem, and the system involving this wall — run counter to international law. Those practices have also proven useless. True peace cannot be established by building psychological and physical barriers, nor through excessive use of the military machinery against civilians. True peace is achieved through serious and responsible political will. That peace is long overdue in the Middle East.

In that context, Tunisia repeats its call to the international community and active stakeholders to rapidly intervene in order to provide the necessary protection to the Palestinian people and force Israel to stop its practices against them and to end all unilateral measures. Tunisia also reiterates the importance of stopping the building of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territories, including in and around Jerusalem, in accordance with General Assembly

resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004, and to dismantle what has already been built.

Tunisia reiterates that peace is the strategic option, and we must maintain solidarity with the fraternal people of Palestine and support their struggle to restore their legitimate rights and find a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of the Middle East. Tunisia would also like to see efforts continue to resume negotiations on the basis of the relevant international decisions. We call on the Quartet to intensify its efforts towards that end. Returning to the logic of peace, recognizing the national rights of the Palestinian people and reaching a just solution at all levels will no doubt allow for peaceful co-existence among all the peoples of the region in a climate of understanding and security. Thus they could start building and reconstruction in order to achieve progress and prosperity for all.

The United Nations — especially the General Assembly and the Security Council — has a permanent responsibility vis-à-vis the Palestinian people, and it must continue to shoulder that responsibility. The Organization is the guarantor and protector of the bases of international legitimacy with regard to the question of Palestine and of the Middle East in general. It is a political role that must continue until a just and comprehensive solution is finally found.

The President: I thank the representative of Tunisia for the kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, on whom I now call.

Mr. Badji (*spoke in French*): After having congratulated you, Mr. President for the effective way in which you are discharging your duties as President this month, let me pay tribute to your predecessor, and to cordially commend Mr. Alvaro de Soto.

I also wish to express my deep gratitude to you, Sir, and to all members of the Council for providing the opportunity to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to take part in this important debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, particularly the situation today, with the difficult problems stemming from the settlement activity and the ongoing construction of the wall.

The issues before the Council are extremely important and call for urgent solutions. While recently the world's attention has focused on the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and certain northern portions of the West Bank announced by Israel, the Israeli Government actively pursues a programme that consists of developing major settlements on the West Bank and extending the boundaries of Jerusalem and favouring the increase of the Israeli population in the city. The settlements in Greater Jerusalem are being built in contradiction to Israel's obligations set out in the Quarter's road map. The Israeli Minister for Construction and Housing has issued new tenders for the construction of hundreds of houses in those settlements, while building permits are denied to Palestinians and while houses belonging to Palestinians are destroyed and requests for family reunification are ignored.

The Israeli plan that causes the greatest concern is the E-1 plan, which is designed to link East Jerusalem with the major settlement on the West Bank, Maale Adumim, by building approximately 3,500 houses between the two. That project would amount to cutting off East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, thus preventing the Palestinians from attaining their ultimate objective: to establish the capital of a future Palestinian State in the city.

At the beginning of this month, we celebrated the first anniversary of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Court clearly stated that the construction of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around Jerusalem, and its associated regime are contrary to international law. Despite the concerted efforts of the international community, the Israeli Government has not put an end to the construction. To the contrary, it has approved the building of new sections that will eventually encompass the vast settlements around East Jerusalem on the Israeli side.

Those developments in the situation on the ground do not promote an end to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. The construction of the wall and the new losses of land caused by the expansion of the settlements worsen the economic and social situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. They prevent the Palestinian people from exercising its inalienable rights and vitiate the prospects for a viable,

contiguous Palestinian State existing side by side with Israel. Palestinians have known frustration, humiliation and difficulties of all kinds for decades and are losing hope of someday seeing political negotiations lead to solutions.

Nonetheless, there are certain grounds for hope, particularly since the Sharm el-Sheikh summit was held earlier this year. However, with regard to the road map, the implementation of the decisions taken at that time is extremely slow. In recent days, the violence — which had declined since the summit — has again intensified. The Committee has always firmly condemned all acts of violence, including suicide attacks and extrajudicial executions, because they mainly hit innocent Palestinians and Israeli civilians and only harm the peace efforts. Although we do indeed believe that Israel is responsible for the security of its citizens, the disproportionate use of force against Palestinians cannot be justified.

The Committee takes note of the report published recently by Switzerland (A/ES-10/304, annex), as depositary of the Geneva Conventions, following consultations with the various actors concerned and all of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention. We hope that the proposals set out in the report will facilitate the search for means to guarantee compliance with international humanitarian law.

The Committee urges Israel, as the occupying Power, to fulfil its obligations and immediately put an end to the construction of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and to dismantle the sections already built. Israel has the obligation to make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall It should also put an end to the expansion of the settlements and to the transfer of population towards the West Bank. Moreover, the Committee hopes that the Secretary-General will swiftly establish a register of damage caused by the wall's construction.

We appeal to the international community, including the States Members of the United Nations and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, to do everything possible to ensure that Israel complies with international humanitarian law and that it plans new measures to put an end to the illegal situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. The international community should have acted long ago to put an end to the wall's construction and to the creation of new settlements throughout the Palestinian lands. Decades ago, Israelis and Palestinians should have embarked on the most promising path — that of dialogue and cooperation — with a view to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for themselves and for all the peoples of the Middle East region.

The President: I thank Mr. Badji for the kind words he expressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, which provides an opportunity for world public opinion and United Nations Member States to become familiar with the gravity of the situation in the Middle East in general and of the question of Palestine in particular. We are pleased to see Mr. Alvaro de Soto in the Council for the first time in his capacity as Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General. We wish him every success in his endeavours.

Every day that Israel continues its illegal occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan, the anguish of millions of Arab citizens increases as they suffer under the scourge of the occupation and its catastrophic economic, social and humanitarian effects. The latest Israeli escalation forges yet another link in the endless chain of Israel's violations of international law and international humanitarian law.

A few days ago, we marked the passing of an entire year since the International Court of Justice issued its historic advisory opinion on the colonialist wall built by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories. Instead of fully complying with the advisory opinion of the world's highest judicial body, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued building the wall as an expression of its contempt for the advisory opinion and for the will of the international community as expressed by the General Assembly in its resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004.

When we consider that the Court demanded that Israel end its violations of international law, halt the construction of the wall, dismantle the sections already built and provide the Palestinians with reparations for

the damage caused by its construction, we cannot fail to note the contradiction between the Court's position and what the representative of Israel said in his statement, which was an attempt to mislead the Council and international public opinion.

Israel has turned a deaf ear to the international community's condemnation of its policies and its expansionist wall. Proof of that can be seen in the fact that only a few days ago, the Israeli Cabinet took the decision to continue building the wall in the heart of occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and to complete it by September. The Israeli plan will result in the isolation of more than 65,000 Palestinians from their families, property, hospitals, schools and universities. We must also look closely at recent Israeli statements in the context of Israel's other plans to build a number of settlements to isolate East Jerusalem from its Palestinian environment and, in practice, to annex it to Israel. In that way, Israel will have drawn new borders that are very different from those of 1967.

The wall, which is three times higher than and nearly twice as long as the notorious Berlin wall, has become yet another symbol of oppression, suppression and the arrogance of power. We are confident that the wall's fate will be no better than that of its predecessor, which has passed into history.

In addition to all their other illegal actions, the Israeli occupation forces have escalated their acts of aggression against the Palestinian people. In recent days, they have destroyed a great number of Palestinian homes, and, in clear violation of international law and humanitarian law, they have assassinated a number of Palestinians and continue to do so.

Through its recent decisions, the Israeli Cabinet has established a large number of settlements and approved the expansion of existing settlements, to the detriment of the Palestinian people's property and rights. The fact that Israel seeks to establish settlements in the occupied Palestinian and Syrian territories reveals the falseness of the claims of successive Israeli Governments, including the current Government, that they wish to achieve peace. If the Israeli Government's actions against settlers in the Gaza Strip are genuine, why is the Government planning to establish more settlements? Israelis know full well that those settlements cannot remain, because they present an insurmountable obstacle to the achievement of peace in the region.

More than 8,000 Palestinians, including 259 children, are being held in Israeli prisons. Over the past year alone, Israel has killed more than 859 Palestinians. In total, more than 3,670 Palestinians have been killed by Israel since 2000. Is that not a war crime? It is shocking that 41 employees of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East have been deliberately killed by Israel, without any notable reaction from the international community, including the Security Council.

The Palestinian detainees and their brethren detained in the Golan Heights live in unacceptable prisons that fail to meet the most basic sanitary conditions. Approximately a week ago, Hayel Abu Zaid, a Syrian citizen from the occupied Syrian Golan, died, a few days after his release from prison as a result of inhuman treatment, torture and deliberate neglect at the hands of the Israeli authorities during his more than 18 years in prison.

The Israeli withdrawal from Gaza must be complete and comprehensive. Israel must also fully withdraw from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The international community must be vigilant and must call for full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza — including its land, sea and air spaces in order to make the withdrawal complete. Israel must not be allowed to use the withdrawal as a cover for its continued occupation of the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories and East Jerusalem.

Israel uses many flimsy arguments in its war against the Palestinians; the Council heard some of them from the representative of Israel earlier in today's meeting. However, the essence of the conflict is one people's military occupation of another people and their land for more than four decades. It is about the occupying Power's relentless aggression against the peoples and the lands of Syria and Palestine. It is about Israel's refusal to end that occupation because it is attempting to acquire more territory by force and to displace large numbers of Palestinians from their homes and lands, using death, destruction and misery as tools to carry out its expansionist schemes.

Unimpeded, Israel continues to carry out its illegal and unjust practices and policies in full view of the international community and, unfortunately, in full

view of the Security Council, which bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council must make bold and courageous decisions to ensure full compliance with its relevant resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and to ensure the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region on all tracks. The Council must ensure the rule of international law and put an end to the cycle of violence and bloodshed that for so many decades has prevented the attainment of comprehensive and just peace, security and freedom in that important part of the world.

The delegation of the United States of America has described the situation between Syria and Lebanon in an artificial and thoroughly false manner. That constitutes unacceptable interference in the relations between two brotherly countries. The tone of incitement of the United States statement does not bode well for Lebanon or its relations with Syria. We do not think that the question of movements between our two countries was worthy of being raised in the Security Council, especially because the recent controls at the Syrian-Lebanese border are temporary and dictated by security requirements. I wish to remind the United States delegation that the two sides, without mediation or interference from the United States, are cooperating and are well on the way to settling the issue. It is very strange that the United States should call upon Syria to take stringent measures along its border with one neighbouring country and, at the same time, express concern that the same measures are being taken on Syria's other border, with Lebanon.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Malaysia, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Mohd. Radzi (Malaysia): Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this timely and important meeting. We are pleased and honoured to address the Council today under the presidency of Greece.

At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the delegation of Kuwait on behalf of the Group of Arab States. My delegation considers that the question currently before the Council continues to be central to peace and security concerns in the Middle East and throughout the world.

Malaysia remains gravely concerned at the continuing deterioration of the precarious situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. There have been too many deaths and injuries and too much destruction and indescribable suffering for far too long, especially among the Palestinians. We should not consider the casualties and destruction on both sides merely in terms of numbers or percentages. The life of each human being — man, woman or child — is sacred and precious and must be protected. We mourn the loss of all innocent lives. Any act of violence inflicted in the conflict upon innocent civilians, whether Palestinians or Israelis, is unacceptable and deserves equal condemnation by us all.

Malaysia has made clear its condemnation of violence and terrorism. But we can fully understand the despair and frustration of the Palestinians and their responses to Israel's continued occupation and annexation of Palestinian territories and to the application of harsh and often inhuman policies and practices, as well as the excessive and disproportionate use of force by Israel against the Palestinians and other Arabs in the occupied territories over the past 38 years. It is incumbent upon both sides to transform the reversible deadly cycle of violence and terror into an enduring period of calm, peace and security in the region.

The completed portions of the separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem and its continuing construction by Israel seriously endanger the prospects for peace in the region and undermine the implementation of the road map. The adverse impact of the wall on all aspects of Palestinian life is overwhelming. The wall as it stands — and more so once it is completed — could have serious ramifications, inter alia, for the peace process, negotiations on final status issues and the creation of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State, as envisaged in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) and upheld in the road map. The construction of the wall is a clear violation of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. The continuing construction of the wall signifies a deliberate act of blatant disrespect by Israel for the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), as well as of General Assembly resolution ES-10/15.

It is indeed very disappointing that Israel has decided not only to continue but to accelerate the

construction and completion of the separation wall, on the pretext of security and defence. We urge Israel to dismantle the wall and to immediately discontinue its construction. We also urge Israel to take all measures necessary to ensure compliance with the ICJ advisory opinion and resolution ES-10/15.

Furthermore, we urge the Security Council to look into this matter seriously and expeditiously, in accordance with its functions and powers under Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. It is regrettable that one year has passed without the Council having responded to the advisory opinion of the Court — the highest judicial body of the United Nations — on such an important question concerning the maintenance of international peace and security. We look forward to an opportunity to respond in due course to the report submitted by Switzerland, in its capacity as depositary State of the Geneva Conventions, pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution ES-10/15 (A/ES-10/304, annex).

The planned Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip must be a full and complete withdrawal from that area — including its land, sea and air space. That must be followed by similar steps in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. It would thus be unacceptable for any other area of the occupied Palestinian territory to be colonized by Israel in conjunction with the completion of its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. Any withdrawal plan should be part of the road map and should be carried out in full cooperation with the Palestinian Authority. It will be incumbent upon both sides to resume negotiations on the final status issues immediately upon the completion of a full withdrawal by Israel from the occupied Palestinian territory.

The international community has a collective role to play in finding a solution to the Palestinian question. We must all work together to facilitate and intensify efforts to attain a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The United Nations, including the Security Council, has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in its entirety on the basis of the Charter, relevant resolutions of the United Nations and international law.

The continued plight and suffering of the Palestinian people remain the tragic embodiment of the consequences of the non-implementation of resolutions and the non-enforcement of decisions of the Security Council. There are ways by which the Security Council can ensure compliance by Israel with its resolutions and decisions. The Security Council must exercise its role and responsibility in that regard. Malaysia calls upon the Security Council to do so now, to ensure that justice and the rule of law prevail in the occupied Palestinian territory. The international community must prevail upon Israel to respect its obligations under international law and abide by Security Council resolutions, just as other States are expected to do.

In conclusion, Malaysia remains convinced that an independent and sovereign Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital will be the best hope for lasting peace in the region, with both Israel and Palestine living peacefully side by side within secure and recognized borders. The international community cannot afford to turn a blind eye or a deaf ear, and claim ignorance to the plight of Palestinians. It must express and maintain its solidarity with the Palestinian people and work together to facilitate the attainment of comprehensive peace in the region. The valiant struggle of the Palestinian people against Israeli occupation, against the injustices suffered by them and against the inhumane treatment meted out to them must be recognized and appropriately responded to without further delay. The international community should muster the necessary political will, wisdom and courage to decisively respond to the need for a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement to the conflict. The long-suffering people of Palestine deserve nothing less. Peace will remain elusive unless all parties concerned, the region and the wider international community are prepared to play their part responsibly.

The President: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of India, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Gopinathan (India): We thank you, Mr. President, for providing the general membership with an opportunity to proffer their views on the situation in the Middle East by scheduling this open debate of the Security Council. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Alvaro de Soto on his recent appointment as the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and for his comprehensive briefing this morning.

This meeting of the Security Council comes at a critical time in the Middle East. The Secretary-General recently noted the prospects for a positive conjuncture in the Middle East peace process when he said:

> "Recent events in the Middle East have raised hopes of a possible resumption of the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians. We have witnessed the successful completion of Palestinian presidential elections on 9 January 2005, which was followed by the convening of the Summit at Sharm el-Sheikh on 8 February 2005, where Israeli and Palestinian leaders announced a series of commitments to end violence, and to rebuild trust and mutual confidence". (*S/2005/432*)

Israel's proposed withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank is scheduled to take place next month. The international community is hopeful that the withdrawal will represent a step in the broader peace process, and that it will be used as a springboard to revitalize the road map. It is essential for the Israeli and Palestinian sides to coordinate the economic, civilian and security aspects of the withdrawal. The withdrawal must take place as scheduled. In that context, the decision of the Israeli Knesset yesterday to vote down three resolutions aimed at delaying the withdrawal is a welcome development. We hope that the withdrawal will be full and complete, and that it will be followed by negotiations on final status issues.

Unfortunately, recent events, including an escalation in violence, have threatened the hopes for progress that the past few months had represented. The recent suicide bombing in Netanya, Israel, and the firing of rockets from Gaza were condemnable acts. We call upon the Palestinian Authority to continue to make every effort to prevent such actions. At the same time, Israel's resumed forceful actions in response to those attacks, including targeted killings, could seriously compromise the calm that has prevailed in the past few months. While we recognize Israel's legitimate right to self-defence, we have also cautioned that any such moves should be exercised proportionately and in conformity with international law.

Israel's ongoing construction of the separation wall remains a source of deep concern to the international community. As we have stated in the past, no one could have objections to the construction of the wall in areas coinciding with the Green Line. Its encroachment on Palestinian land and interests creates great hardships for the people affected by its construction and exacerbates the situation. Besides, continued construction of the wall on Palestinian land threatens to prejudge the eventual outcome of the final status negotiations between the parties.

In that connection, we recall the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction by Israel of the wall in the occupied Palestine territory. The Court opined that the wall is contrary to international law and should be dismantled. We called on Israel, in keeping with overwhelming international opinion on the matter, to take full account of the advisory opinion with a view to its early implementation. We once again renew our call on Israel to take note of the recommendations in General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004, based on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. We also call upon the Secretary-General to establish the register of damage, as recommended by the same General Assembly resolution, at the earliest date.

One of the primary obligations under the road map was the requirement for Israel to halt all settlement activity, including natural growth, and to dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001. We call upon Israel to fulfil its obligations and to desist from any further settlement construction activity. That would also serve as an important confidence-building measure.

At this juncture, it is critical for the international community, in particular the Middle East Quartet, to carefully monitor the situation and to work closely with the parties with a view to encouraging them to fulfil their commitments and obligations. At the same time, it must be ensured that vested interests on both sides are not allowed to derail the process, thereby once again damaging the real prospects for peace in the Middle East.

Notwithstanding the recent discouraging events, we are confident that a just and comprehensive solution to the conflict is attainable. We call upon all sides to work together assiduously to achieve the vision of two States living side by side in secure and recognized borders, based on Security Council

resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003).

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Lebanon, on whom I now call.

Mr. Assaf (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Israel continues to build the separation wall inside the occupied Palestinian territories. It is now 720 kilometres long and 90 per cent of its length falls within the West Bank, at a depth of 22 kilometres in some places. It isolates the Palestinian population and violates their basic rights.

The completion of the wall will entail the annexation of approximately 1,000 square kilometres of West Bank territory, as noted in one of the Secretary-General's reports. Thus, it is not accurate to claim that the wall separates Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, for the majority of its sections separate Palestinian lands from other Palestinian lands that have been usurped and annexed by Israel.

Israel advances security reasons to justify the construction of the wall. If those reasons were genuine, why should it not be built along the armistice lines of 1949? The construction is a unilateral measure that totally disregards the recommendations contained in resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) on achieving a peaceful settlement through negotiations and, of course, with the agreement of both parties.

In pursuing its construction of the separation wall, Israel is violating both the legal principle that establishes the illegality of acquiring land by force and the relevant General Assembly resolutions calling on it to cease building the wall in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. The construction also contravenes the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which ruled that the wall violates international law and is an obstacle to the establishment of a contiguous Palestinian State, and that Israel must cease construction forthwith, dismantle the completed sections, and offer compensation for the damage resulting from the construction.

The Security Council is required to take all necessary measures to put an end to the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the separation wall, pursuant to the provisions of international law and to paragraph 160 of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on that issue.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Indonesia, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Alvaro de Soto, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the Secretary-General's Personal Representative, for his comprehensive briefing.

Just two days ago, the Indonesian delegation to the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council delivered a statement deploring the deepening economic and social hardship endured by the Palestinian people in the face of Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territory. Against the backdrop of recent developments in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in particular the deterioration of the situation on the ground, the convening of this meeting upon the request of the Arab Group and the Arab League is indeed timely and highly relevant.

We are particularly alarmed by the continued and accelerated construction of Israel's unlawful wall in the territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. It is a blatant violation of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, and also a flagrant sign of disrespect for the relevant advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, as well as of General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004.

Clearly, the construction of the wall violates the economic and social rights of the Palestinian people and is having a grave impact on their economic and social conditions. We cannot ignore the resource problems, including the lack of water distribution and water pollution deriving from infrastructure and environmental damages as the result of that policy. The restrictions imposed by the wall have caused waterborne diseases, not to mention the food insecurity that will certainly affect the health of the Palestinian people.

The Israeli plan to extend its wall around the illegal settlements located east of Jerusalem will lead to the confiscation of even more Palestinian land. That will place further restrictions on the freedom of

movement of Palestinian civilians to and from Jerusalem. As noted by Mr. Alvaro de Soto this morning, Israel continues to build settlements in the occupied territory in an extensive manner. Indeed, the settlements are causing geographical fragmentation that will eventually threaten family life and affect the most vulnerable of the population, primarily children, who are facing greater difficulties in accessing education.

As we speak, more Palestinian homes, factories, public infrastructure and agricultural land continue to be destroyed for illegal settlements, transforming more Palestinians into refugees in their own land. If such Israeli policies and practices are allowed to go further, the final status of occupied East Jerusalem in future peace negotiations will be threatened. It may also threaten the prospects of the two-State solution and even the very existence of the Palestinian State.

That situation needs urgent attention from the international community. It is my delegation's fervent hope that the Council will take immediate action to prevent the situation from deteriorating and compel Israel to respect its international obligations under international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law.

My delegation is deeply disturbed by reports of continuing atrocities committed by Israel in the occupied territories, of which the majority of victims are Palestinians, including women and children. Violence can never provide the solution to a conflict, as it seriously undermines the prospects for peace.

In our view, the only necessary and sustainable option for improving the situation is an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Syrian Golan. Israel must withdraw fully from Gaza as well as from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. That should include withdrawal from land, sea and air spaces and it should immediately be followed by negotiations on the final status issue. However, the ongoing process of Israeli disengagement from Gaza, while it is an encouraging sign, should not be used a pretext for continued colonization of the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem.

In conclusion, let me say that Indonesia remains fully committed to the struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve its inalienable rights and to realize its aspiration to a secure and prosperous independent homeland.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Saudi Arabia, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to join other speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. We are confident that you will guide the work of the Council with great wisdom. We wish also to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of France, for his wise conduct of the Council's work last month.

Harsh — indeed unbearable — social and economic conditions continue to prevail in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. That is a result of the escalation of violence and Israel's illegal policies and practices of oppression. Israel continues to set up checkpoints and turn them into border crossings and to expand its construction of illegal settlements.

Israel has always defied the decisions of international legitimacy, and one year after the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, it has continued that defiance by deciding to accelerate the construction of the separation wall around Jerusalem with the purpose of completing the wall that Israel has been building for the past two years. The wall will annex more than 8 per cent of the West Bank and will isolate cities and villages. In the full view of the Security Council and on the pretext of security and self-defence considerations, Israel is continuing construction of the separation wall in total disregard for the Court's advisory opinion and in contempt of General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004.

The wall's purpose is to eject the largest possible number of Palestinians. They will have to leave their jobs, their lands and their property because of the humiliating constraints that Israel imposes upon them. The Government of Israel is confiscating those lands and other property and is building new Israeli settlements, some of them very populous, in order to completely Judaize the land and strip Palestinians of all their rights, including basic human rights.

The international community and all peace-loving people welcomed the advisory opinion of the

International Court of Justice and accepted its recommendations and conclusions. The separation wall has given a new dimension to the problem: it jeopardizes efforts to secure peace in the region; it could undermine the road map; and it is a major obstacle to the establishment of a viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in accordance with Security Council resolution 1397 (2002).

The international community cannot shut its eyes or turn a deaf ear to the suffering of the Palestinian people. It must reaffirm its solidarity with the Palestinian people, which is sorely suffering under ugly colonization and unjust occupation. The international community, represented by the United Nations — and in particular by the Security Council — must endeavour to put pressure on Israel and oblige it to abide by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice by halting the construction of the wall and dismantling the parts that have already been built.

Israel's actions are contrary not only to international law and international humanitarian law, but also to the very spirit of our times, the principles of the Charter and humanitarian values that reject racism in all its forms, for Israel's building of the separation wall is a clear act of racism.

We reaffirm that the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza must be comprehensive and complete. It must be followed by Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including East Jerusalem. Unilateral disengagement from Gaza must not be a mere cloak for continued Israeli occupation of the other Palestinian lands, including East Jerusalem. Israeli withdrawal from Gaza must be followed by the start of final-status negotiations.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is greatly concerned at the suffering of the Palestinian people and at the fact that Palestinians and their cities are undergoing Israeli violence, aggression, human rights violations, violations of international resolutions and destruction of infrastructure. We call upon the international community to sound the alarm about these oppressive Israeli practices and to shoulder its political, moral and humanitarian responsibility in that regard. We call upon the Security Council to continue to work towards a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in all its dimensions, in accordance with the Charter, the relevant United Nations resolutions, international humanitarian law, the road map and the Arab peace initiative.

The President: I thank the representative of Saudi Arabia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me, Sir, to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I should also like to thank you for convening this meeting on an issue that is very important for the international community in general and for the Middle East in particular. We also wish to pay tribute to last month's French presidency of the Council.

A year ago this month, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), in its advisory opinion, found the construction of the separation wall cutting through the occupied West Bank to be illegal. The ICJ asserted that the wall had to be dismantled and that the Palestinians had to be compensated for losses sustained due to its construction. Shortly after that, the General Assembly cemented the ICJ opinion by adopting resolution ES-10/15, which acknowledged the advisory opinion, demanded that Israel comply with it and called upon all Member States to respect the legal obligations stipulated therein.

Blatant defiance was the Israeli response to the will of the international community so clearly expressed. Over the past year, the building of the unlawful expansionist wall, including in and around East Jerusalem, went on at a faster pace, as did the ongoing destruction of properties and the confiscation and annexation of Palestinian land required for construction. In parallel, the expansion of Jewish settlements on the occupied Palestinian land, also deemed illegal by the same advisory opinion of the Court, has continued unabated.

The recent approval by the Israeli cabinet of a route for the section of the concrete wall being built around Jerusalem is the latest act of flagrant defiance of the will of the international community. That section of the wall cuts through two densely populated Palestinian neighbourhoods, cutting off an additional 55,000 — maybe more — Palestinian residents of occupied East Jerusalem from the rest of the city and from their work, schools, hospitals and families. It also

prevents other Palestinians from reaching occupied East Jerusalem and denies them complete access to the Holy City. In so doing, the Israeli regime is seeking to achieve the goal of tilting the demographic balance and pursuing the aim of the Judaization of the city by imposing a fait accompli on the Palestinians.

International law holds that no occupying Power has a right to change the features of the territories it occupies. The International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, reiterates this basic principle by stressing that

> "all States are under an obligation not to recognize the illegal situation arising from the construction of the wall, not to render aid or assistance in maintaining that situation"; (*A/ES-10/273, p. 52, para. 163*)

and

> "to ensure compliance by Israel with international humanitarian law as embodied in [the Fourth Geneva] Convention". (*ibid.*)

There is no doubt that the legal stipulations in this paragraph entrust the international community with an immense responsibility. Besides, this wall flies in the face of justice and basic humane values, and those who claim to be in possession of such lofty values should not remain indifferent to it, let alone condone it.

The Palestinian people continue to suffer and endure hardship in the face of illegal Israeli practices and policies, including crimes such as collective punishment, house demolitions, land confiscation and targeted and indiscriminate extrajudicial killings. In recent months, over 60 Palestinians have been killed, including through the resumption of Israel's terrorist acts and extrajudicial executions, bringing the number of Palestinian deaths since September 2000 to more than 3,670. At the same time, the number of injured persons continues to increase. These crimes, coupled with other illegal Israeli practices, such as restrictions on the freedom of movement of Palestinian persons and goods, as well as the existence of hundreds of checkpoints throughout the occupied Palestinian territory and the continuation and even acceleration of the construction of the illegal Jewish settlements, have in turn caused the already dire socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people to deteriorate, making daily life unbearable.

We note that all efforts made in past years to de-escalate the Palestinian conflict have been torpedoed by the callous and belligerent Israeli positions and actions, which further proves that the Israeli regime is adamant in its desire to defy international law and the will of the international community. Undoubtedly, until the legitimate rights of the Palestinians are restored — including their right to independent statehood and the return of all Palestinian refugees to their homeland — a fair, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian issue will be out of reach.

We believe that the Security Council should not stand idly by and avoid addressing seriously the Palestinian question, which threatens peace and security in the region and beyond. It is unfortunate that the exercise of the veto has prevented the Council from fulfilling its responsibilities with regard to the Palestinian question thus far. Indeed, the selective show of resolve and the discriminatory approach taken towards enforcing the Council's resolutions undermine its credibility and adversely affect the overall international security system.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Norway, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Juul (Norway): Let me first of all express our appreciation to the United Nations special envoy, Mr. de Soto, for his comprehensive briefing here today.

Israel's decision to disengage from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank is a brave step that should trigger the immediate implementation of the road map and the revitalization of the peace process. Hopefully, it will bring us closer to the realization of the vision of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

For the disengagement to have that effect, its significant potential for revitalizing the Palestinian economy must be utilized. The disengagement will aid the speedy implementation of the road map and breathe new life into the peace process only if we manage to harness its potential for revitalizing the Palestinian economy.

As chair of the donor group — the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee — Norway welcomes the important work done by James Wolfensohn to ensure the success of disengagement. The Liaison Committee stands ready to support Mr. Wolfensohn's efforts to mobilize

tangible financial contributions from the international donor community in support of his rapid-reaction programme.

We also welcome the political courage shown by the leaders of the two sides so far with regard to disengagement. However, it is essential that the parties coordinate the disengagement process and cooperate effectively with Mr. Wolfensohn. Furthermore, the Palestinian Authority should speed up its reform programme and Israel should do what it can to create the conditions necessary for viable Palestinian economic growth after the withdrawal from Gaza and certain parts of the northern West Bank.

The international community, as well as the parties, must also look beyond the disengagement to "the morning after". We must not allow the disengagement process to divert attention away from the continued expansion of settlements on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem and the continued construction of the barrier east of the Green Line. That policy undermines the possibility of positive dividends from the Gaza disengagement. We are concerned by the recent Israeli cabinet decision to immediately complete the separation barrier in and around East Jerusalem. Israel must stop and reverse the construction of the barrier inside Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. Any changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties are not acceptable.

We are deeply concerned by the recent escalation of the violence in Israel and in the Palestinian territories. We condemned unreservedly the recent terrorist attacks on Israel. The Palestinian Authority must take immediate and effective action against those involved in attacks. Israel, for its part, has an indisputable right to protect its citizens against terrorist attacks. However, international law bans the practice of extrajudicial killings.

Furthermore, the Palestinian Authority must step up its efforts to ensure a secure environment for its citizens. Norway will continue its support for the development of Palestinian security capacity through the Palestinian civil police, in coordination with the European Union Coordination Office for Palestinian Policing Support and the United States Security Coordinator, General Ward.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Sudan, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Mannan (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to join preceding speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are fully confident that your patience and wisdom will ensure the success of the Council's work. I should also like to congratulate Mr. Alvaro de Soto on his appointment as Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General and to thank him for his lucid and comprehensive briefing this morning.

The question of Palestine is truly at the centre of the world's attention and at the core of the conflict in the Middle East. The deterioration of the humanitarian situation in that important part of the world is one of the greatest challenges for the Security Council in carrying out its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Notwithstanding the outcome of the February 2005 Sharm el-Sheikh summit, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, continues to deteriorate in a harrowing manner. The steadfast Palestinian people continue to bear the brunt of Israel's unjust policies and practices. Houses are being demolished over the heads of their occupants, land is being confiscated, and unarmed young people, elderly people, women and children continue to be killed.

Even more grave is the fact that Israel continues to build its illegal wall on usurped Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Israel carries out its unjust aggression by demolishing buildings and confiscating land for that purpose, in clear contravention and violation of international law, humanitarian law and conventions on human rights. Israel also persists in its disregard and contempt for General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 and for the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the wall.

The Court's advisory opinion on the wall of injustice is now more than a year old. Its pages remain open and in full view for the whole world to read if it so wishes. The Court declared the wall to be illegal and called upon Israel to desist forthwith from its construction, to dismantle the sections already built, to abrogate all laws pertaining to the wall's construction

and to make reparation for all damage resulting from that construction. The Court also ruled that all States are under an obligation not to recognize the illegal situation resulting from the wall's construction and to ensure compliance by Israel with international humanitarian law as embodied in the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip must be a genuine and complete withdrawal — that is, from land, sea and air space. It must be followed by Israel's full withdrawal from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. That in turn must be followed immediately by the commencement of final-status negotiations with a view to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm the Sudan's complete solidarity with the Palestinian people and our support for them in their cause, whose justness has been recognized by the international community as a whole. We call upon the Security Council to adopt a firm position to compel Israel to comply with the Charter of the United Nations, international law, international humanitarian law, the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice so that security and stability can prevail in this important and vital part of the world, whose stability forms the basis for peace, security and stability throughout the rest of the world.

The President: I thank the representative of the Sudan for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Cuba, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Gala López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We consider the convening of this open debate to consider recent events in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, to be very timely. The situation there has deteriorated even further.

The recent hostile actions of Israel, the occupying Power, add to its long record of decades of aggression, violations of the most basic human rights and physical and emotional damage inflicted on the Palestinian people. That includes, inter alia, illegal settlements, house demolitions, arbitrary detentions, State terrorism and targeted extrajudicial executions, torture, the building of a separation wall in Palestinian territories and the suffocation of the Palestinian economy, all of which continues to increase the economic and social hardships of the Palestinians.

Despite the appeals of the international community, the crisis in the Palestinian territories continues to worsen as the number of dead and injured rises, the vast majority of them innocent civilians. In that respect, we reaffirm that Israel must comply with international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

Approximately one year has passed since the General Assembly adopted its resolution ES-10/15. However, the occupying Power has continued the dangerous and unacceptable construction of the separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, despite the fact that it is illegal and in violation of the norms and principles of international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The illegality of the construction of the wall and its associated regime was clearly confirmed by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 9 July 2004. Construction of the wall must cease immediately, and what has already been built must be demolished without delay.

Cuba continues to condemn the acts of annexation, the excessive use of force that does not discriminate between civilians and combatants, the humanitarian crisis resulting from limitations on the circulation of goods and persons, the inhumane treatment of children, the generalized destruction of property and the territorial expansion through the construction of the separation wall.

Violence and the use of force cannot lead to the solution that the world seeks for a conflict that would have been settled many years ago if the Security Council had acted with decision and transparency and without double standards. In order to advance in earnest towards a just solution of the Palestinian problem, the United States should refrain from using its paralysing and complicit vetoes when this question is under consideration in the Council. And it should immediately suspend financial support for military purposes and the delivery of military equipment to Israel, including tanks, helicopters, missiles and aircraft, which today are used against civilians.

Cuba reaffirms its full support for the cause of the Arab peoples, in particular the Palestinian people,

against the occupation and the aggression of Israel. We express our deep solidarity with their resistance and rebellion. At the same time, Cuba denounces the suicide bomb attacks and other acts against Israeli civilians, innocent victims in the spiral of violence caused by their Government's policies, and we are opposed to the manipulation of those isolated acts to put in question the Palestinian people's exercise of legitimate defence and to justify selective, large-scale measures against the Palestinian people.

We reaffirm that no just and lasting peace can be achieved in the Middle East until the Israeli occupation is ended; the Palestinian people can exercise their legitimate right to establish an independent State, with its capital in East Jerusalem; all the occupied Arab territories are returned; Israel withdraws from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Syrian Golan to the borders of 4 June 1967; the Israeli provocations in the south of Lebanon are halted; the return of Palestinian refugees is guaranteed; and the illegal Israeli settlements are removed from all the occupied territories.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): First, let me welcome Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, congratulate him on his appointment and express our deep appreciation for his balanced report to the Security Council today.

We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open meeting on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. In the face of the far-reaching developments taking place in the region, it is important for the international community to be actively engaged. This Council in particular has a special responsibility for peace in the Middle East.

A lot has been said during the day-long debate. I would like to make five essential points.

First, the construction of the separation wall by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories, aside from enormously aggravating human suffering in the Palestinian territories, poses a mortal danger to the peace process, seriously undermines the implementation of the road map and presents a major obstacle to the creation of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State. Last July, the International Court of Justice rendered its advisory opinion, concluding that the wall is illegal.

The General Assembly, in resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004, demanded that Israel comply with its legal obligations as mentioned in the advisory opinion, which, inter alia, included immediate cessation of the wall's construction, the dismantling of the parts already built and payment of reparations to affected persons.

It is a matter of deep concern that, one year after the Court's advisory opinion and the General Assembly resolution, the construction of that illegal wall continues unabated and has, indeed, accelerated. The Israeli cabinet recently approved the remaining details of the separation wall's route around Jerusalem, which, as Special Coordinator de Soto reported this morning, would cut off some 55,000 Palestinians residents of East Jerusalem from the rest of the city. They will be separated from their workplaces, schools, hospitals and families.

Aside from exacerbating the plight of the Palestinians, that action raises much larger issues, including the final status issues. The international community has an obligation to ensure that Israel does not further ignore the Court's opinion and the General Assembly resolution, that it fulfils its legal obligations and fully respects international humanitarian law, and that it does not pre-empt the final status issues, especially on the status of Jerusalem.

Secondly, the situation on the ground continues to be of serious concern, with an increase in violence and the reported gradual erosion of the ceasefire. While referring to mortar and Qassem rocket attacks by the militants, the Special Coordinator also noted in today's briefing the Israeli side's resumption of the practice of targeted killings. The principal victims of that tragic conflict remain innocent civilians, most of them Palestinians. We appreciate President Abbas's commitment to security reforms and the practical steps taken by the Palestinian Authority to strengthen law and order. Those endeavours deserve the full support of the international community.

The latest statistics also show a significant increase in Israeli construction activity in the West Bank and Gaza. The Quartet, in its statement of 23 June, expressed concern over Israeli settlement activity and rightly affirmed the need to avoid any action that contravenes the road map or prejudices final status negotiations. As consistently demanded by the

international community, all illegal settlement activity must be frozen and reversed.

It is vital that all sides avoid any escalation, observe the utmost restraint and work to establish a stable environment for hope and security. But hope cannot be generated in a vacuum. Peace and development go hand in hand. The Palestinian Authority must have the necessary international assistance to revive the economy and undertake the development activities essential for beginning a new page in Palestinian life. We welcome recent commitments of support to the Palestinians, including at the Group of Eight summit.

Thirdly, the Israeli plan to disengage from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank is a welcome step. It should be implemented with the utmost care and in full coordination with the Palestinian Authority. The withdrawal must be full and complete. Most important, it must be the first step towards the end of the occupation of all Palestinian territories.

Fourthly, Israelis and Palestinian must deepen their dialogue and gradually move to address final status issues. The Security Council should actively promote that process.

Fifthly, the implementation of the road map offers the most viable way forward towards sustainable peace. Ensuring a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute in accordance with resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the road map is our collective obligation. The vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security is one that was reflected in the Arab peace initiative and that has been embraced by the entire international community. We must all work for the earliest possible realization of that vision.

Success in realizing that vision can have profound and positive implications for peace and stability in the entire Middle East and beyond. At this fateful moment, the international community, including the Security Council, must summon the political courage and will to ensure the realization of that shared vision.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Elyounsi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to sincerely thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting to consider the latest developments in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, notably Israel's ongoing and accelerating settlement activities and its construction of the illegal separation wall.

The Israeli occupation authorities continue their acts of aggression and repression against the unarmed Palestinian people. The occupation continues to exacerbate the economic and social suffering of the Palestinian people. Israel's illegal activities, including its ongoing construction of settlements and the separation wall, continue despite the 9 July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004. That is in addition to the restrictions imposed on the movement of people and goods, the destruction of houses, the confiscation of land, the uprooting of trees and extrajudicial executions — which have resulted in the death of 3,670 Palestinians, of whom a third were children killed in cold blood either in their classrooms or on their way to school.

The Israeli occupation's practices against the Palestinian people prove beyond any doubt that the Government of Israel is not serious about achieving a just peace in the Middle East. That is evidenced by its outright rejection of the international community's resolutions, its violations of international law and its disregard of the will of the international community. The Israeli occupation has ignored every peace initiative that the Palestinian people have accepted despite the fact that they provided for just a minimum of their inalienable rights. The last of those initiatives is the so-called road map. Instead, Israel has continued to annex land, build settlements, erect the separation wall and bring in more immigrants while forcing the displacement of the Palestinian people by creating hardships as part of its policy of imposing a de facto situation.

Despite the ICJ's advisory opinion, which declared the separation wall illegal and called upon Israel to cease its construction, dismantle what had already been built, nullify all laws and regulations adopted in connection with it and make reparation for damage caused by it, the Israeli Government decided that the wall would be completed by 1 September 2005. On 10 July, Israel decided to re-route the separation wall through East Jerusalem proper, which constitutes a grave challenge to the will of the

international community and a rejection of the advisory opinion.

Israel's unilateral disengagement and withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is merely a manoeuvre to divert the international community's attention from its plans to annex more land and complete the separation wall. More dangerous yet is Israel's effort to isolate East Jerusalem and all its Islamic Holy Places in order to implement its plans to destroy the Al-Aqsa mosque. That poses a threat not only to peace in the Palestinian territories, but throughout the region and the world at large. Any aggression against East Jerusalem will intensify the conflict in the region, destroy any hopes for a peaceful resolution of the conflict and plunge the world into new depths of conflict, thereby increasing terrorism and fundamentalism and opening up the door to more bloodshed.

If peace is to prevail in the Middle East and its people are to enjoy security, the international community, and the Security Council in particular, should assume its full responsibility to exert pressure upon the occupying Power to put an end to its practices and violations against the Palestinian people and to comply with the will of the international community, implement all resolutions calling upon it to end its practices and expedite its withdrawal from the Palestinian territories.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Morocco, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of Council for this month. We are confident that your well known personal and professional abilities will ensure the full success of the Council's work this month. Allow me also to express the gratitude of the delegation of Morocco to your predecessor, Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière, Permanent Representative of France, for the excellent manner in which he presided over the Council's work last month. It is also a great pleasure for me to congratulate Mr. Alvaro de Soto, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. I have had the pleasure of knowing him for quite some time, during which I have come to know his excellent qualities, which do honour to the international civil service. On behalf of my delegation, I commend him on the briefing he gave the Council this morning on the situation on the ground. I wish him every success in carrying out his extremely important duties.

The Security Council is meeting today to discuss the very disturbing situation prevailing in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, at a time when the international community is very closely following Israel's planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and certain parts of the northern West Bank. Unfortunately, Israel's ongoing policy to expand settlements, its continued construction of the wall, in violation of international law, and its almost daily assaults on the basic rights of Palestinians threaten to worsen the climate of instability and crisis that exists in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Like other speakers here, and as has been done in other forums, we wish to reiterate that no one has a monopoly on feelings. No one has a monopoly on suffering. No one has a monopoly on innocent victims. What Palestinians have come to the Council to ask for is equal application of international law for everyone, including compliance with humanitarian law, as well as the right to exist as a State for two peoples involved in a conflict as least as old as the United Nations itself, if not far older. Palestinians are asking for hope for the children, without regard to nationality or origin, so that they may grow up, have an education and flourish, just like all the other children of the world. Unfortunately, Palestinian now face despair on a daily basis, which inevitably marginalizes them and leads them to extremism.

We condemn all acts of terrorism regardless of origin or the motivation behind them. But we are also aware that, in order to eradicate that scourge, hope must be restored for Palestinians through the establishment of their own State. In order to do that, Israel must take the hand that has been extended to it by the Palestinian Authority, with Mr. Mahmoud Abbas at its head.

We caution against any action now being undertaken to establish new settlements, which constitutes a step backwards — and even a repudiation of the peace efforts — and delays the genuine implementation of the road map. As has been stated repeatedly today, that holds also for Israel's obvious desire to cut off East Jerusalem from its proper Palestinian surroundings.

We were encouraged on hearing of the decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip. We even believed that it was a positive initiative that should take place in the context of the road map as a whole. We hope that decision will be carried out and that it will immediately be followed by the opening of genuine and frank negotiations to continue the implementation of the road map.

A year has already passed since the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued, on 9 July 2004, its advisory opinion regarding the legal consequences arising from the construction of a wall on occupied Palestinian territory. That opinion enabled the General Assembly — in its resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 — to make recommendations for compliance with international law. What was clearly at stake from the beginning of the debate requesting an opinion, as everyone at the United Nations will recall, was not Israel's right to ensure its security on its territory, that is, within the Green Line. No one disputes that. What is at stake is the fact that the wall is located across that Line, in disregard of humanitarian law and the basic rights of the Palestinians. According to the Court, the construction of the wall on Palestinian territory was planned and carried out in violation of international law. As such, Israel bore responsibility, and it was concluded that the illicit action had to stop and that reparation had to be made for damage suffered by the population of the occupied territories.

The international community has called upon Israel to restore international legality on the basis of the opinion of the International Court of Justice. As was pointed out this morning, Israel's Supreme Court has also referred to certain illegalities committed in the building of the wall. In that regard, however, we should not overlook the fact that international law has the final word on the matter and that it takes precedence over the laws and legal practices of States, including Israel's, which is no exception to the general rule.

Beyond that legal aspect, the dismantling of the wall that has been built on occupied territory must occur as part of the effort to restore trust between Israelis and Palestinians. The Kingdom of Morocco, which, as everyone knows, has for many decades been faithful to its constructive role in favour of peace in the Middle East through tolerance among cultures and religions, once again urges Israel to take down the wall, remove its settlements from occupied Palestinian territory and launch a genuine effort to promote dialogue and build a common future between the two peoples involved. It is clear that such an effort should take place in the context of a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East based on the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), as well as resolution 1515 (2003), by which the Council endorsed the road map.

This matter pertains to the future of a people with which we have many ties. However, it also relates to the future of international peace and security, which the Security Council has the responsibility to maintain on behalf of the international community.

The President: I thank the representative of Morocco for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the senior adviser of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, on whom I now call.

Mr. Husain (Organization of the Islamic Conference): At the outset, I should like to join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are confident that, under your leadership, the proceedings and work of the Council will be steered efficiently and successfully. I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière of France, for his excellent guidance of the Council's work last month. We also wish to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important meeting on a subject to which the Organization of the Islamic Conference attaches great importance.

In flagrant disregard of the will of the international community, the Israeli Government has continued the construction of new stretches of the apartheid wall, cutting deep into Palestinian land, despite of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which ruled on the illegality of the construction of the wall and its resulting violation of international law.

Israel has also violated General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 on the wall, which demanded that it cease immediately its construction work, remove the stretches that have been built and discharge its obligations under the road map.

Israel has also started to build new stretches of the apartheid wall around the Holy City of Jerusalem and the surrounding areas of Bethlehem. Israel's continued confiscation of Palestinian land with impunity is isolating the Palestinian territories and causing serious damage to the Palestinian economy, depriving Palestinians of their farms, schools, hospitals and places of worship.

Israel is pursuing the unilateral demarcation of new borders in the West Bank, which amounts to an effective annexation of Palestinian territories, undermining the borders of the Palestinian State and even annihilating the very possibility of its establishment.

It will be recalled that, in early June, the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Mr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, addressed communications to the members of the Quartet, raising several issues of concern with regard to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The OIC Secretary-General has emphasized that the unlawful Israeli expansionist and colonialist policies and practices and seriously damaging and destroying the geographical contiguity of the Palestinian territory, making the two-State solution virtually impossible to achieve. He also stated in his communications that East Jerusalem — the centre, of course, of the Islamic world — has become an occupied city, just like other territories occupied by Israel in 1967.

Israel is bound under international law to refrain from making any changes that prejudice the rights of the Palestinians in the city of Jerusalem. Through you, Mr. President, the OIC calls on the international community, especially the Security Council and the Quartet, to take the necessary measures to uphold international law and to counter the establishment of Israeli illegal settlements and the construction of the wall and its damaging effects on the Palestinian people.

The OIC calls upon all States to impose punitive measures against any public or private entities or corporations that have been contributing to the construction of the wall, and against settlers and all those who are profiting from the settlement activity on the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

With regard to the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the OIC reiterates that this withdrawal must be full and complete and must be followed by Israeli withdrawal from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

In conclusion, the OIC attaches the highest importance to the need for a rapid resolution of the question of Palestine and the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive final peace settlement, based on the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative, the rules and principles of international law, and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. Progress in that direction will move us towards the accomplishment of the two-State solution, whereby Palestine and Israel would live side by side in an environment of harmony and tranquillity. Peace and security would then return to the region. We urge the Council to do its utmost to initiate actions to move in that direction.

The President: I thank Mr. Husain for the kind words he addressed to me.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5231

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5231st meeting

Friday, 22 July 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Djeffal
	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Stamate
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mr. Brencick

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Monthly report of the Secretary-General on Darfur (S/2005/467)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-43482 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Monthly report of the Secretary-General on Darfur (S/2005/467)

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jan Pronk, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Pronk to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the monthly report of the Secretary-General on Darfur, document S/2005/467.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jan Pronk, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan.

I now give the floor to Mr. Pronk.

Mr. Pronk: About a year ago, in June 2004, the Security Council decided to task a United Nations mission to prepare for the monitoring foreseen in the Naivasha Agreement and to support the implementation of a peace agreement, once signed, between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army. One month later, the Council adopted its first resolution concerning Darfur in order to put an end to the mass killings and the crimes against humanity committed since early 2003. In the 12 months that have passed since then, the Council has intensified its involvement and added pressure in order to conclude the Naivasha negotiations and to solve the conflict in Darfur. It also gave a comprehensive mandate to the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) to help implement the peace agreement and to help address the root causes of the conflicts in the Sudan.

It is now one year later, mid-2005. Things have changed; 2005 could become the year of decisive change. It started with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the north and south in Nairobi on 9 January. In April, a delegation of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) came to Khartoum and was welcomed wholeheartedly. For many of them, it was their first visit in more than 20 years. A new constitution was drafted and approved in Khartoum as well as in Rumbek. In July, John Garang himself went to Khartoum. His going was a triumph that was witnessed by a million people. Never before had more people gathered together in the centre of Khartoum in order to show their political belief that peace and unity were within reach. One day later, the Government of National Unity was constituted, with a new Presidency that included Bashir, Garang and Taha. The statements they made were future-oriented and referred to peace, democracy and citizenship. Their body language was a clear expression of joy and confidence that was visible to spectators throughout the Sudan and outside it and that said, peace is here to stay.

Of course, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is not really comprehensive. It deals with only one conflict, albeit the longest civil war in Africa, with the highest number of casualties. Quite a few parties were excluded from the talks in Khartoum as well as in the rest of the north and the south. But the Agreement was meant to be the beginning of a comprehensive peace to be won throughout the Sudan, and also a commitment to make that happen.

Quite a few things are happening. In Cairo, an agreement was reached between the Government and a number of opposition parties that had joined forces in the National Democratic Alliance. Their leader, Al-Mirghani, who had previously been in exile, is now a political partner. The leader of the Umma party, Al-Mahdi, who had been ousted by the military coup that had formed the basis of the present Government, returned as well. Al-Turabi, the leader of the Popular Congress Party and the intellectual force behind that coup, who was later jailed by the present regime, was released from jail. He started directly to use his newly won freedom by criticizing the regime. The state of

emergency was lifted — of course, with the exception of Darfur and the east. Censorship was lifted as well. For the first time, newspapers did not have to get clearance in advance from military intelligence for every article they intended to publish.

The fifth round of Abuja talks has made progress, unlike previous rounds that were hijacked by violent incidents on the ground in Darfur. The talks proceeded without disturbance. Parties — that is, the Government, the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and the Justice Equality Movement (JEM) — negotiated seriously and with flexibility, discussing political issues rather than procedures and minor issues. International partners were united in exerting pressure, and were able to avoid sending contradictory messages. The leadership of the African Union, in particular the efforts by the mediator, Salim Ahmed Salim, was solid and effective. It led to the signing of the declaration of principles that will form the basis for future talks. The talks could be finalized before the end of this year. There also seems to be more confidence in the peace process among commanders of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) on the ground. Further confidence-building is necessary, but there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Talks to address the conflict in the east have yet to start. Violence has increased in the east since the beginning of this year. However, contacts with both the Government and the Eastern Front indicate that there is a willingness to address this conflict through negotiations. Both parties have made some steps towards better conflict management and confidence-building. Here too, reaching an agreement before the end of the year may become a reality.

Last year we said that the road to peace in Darfur and elsewhere in the Sudan runs through Naivasha. That indeed seems to be the case. The spirit of Naivasha is affecting parties throughout the Sudan. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement has had a snowball effect. In Cairo, in Abuja and in the east, texts were drafted that reflected the spirit of peace, diversity, democratization and power-sharing — which are at the core of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. However, that means that the Government, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and all other parties, including the international community, should do their utmost to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in full and without being affected by events on the ground or on the sidelines and not allowing powers in the dark or grumbling spoilers to harm the letter and the spirit of the Agreement.

That is a tall order for both parties. They can achieve it by establishing without delay the mechanisms that have been agreed upon in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Ceasefire Joint Military Committee has already been established, and it is functioning well. However, the Ceasefire Political Committee and the Assessment and Evaluation Commission still have to be set up. The proper and smooth functioning of those institutions is crucial. Peace will be challenged on the ground by the presence of the Lord's Resistance Army, by other armed groups that have not yet decided to lay down their arms and integrate themselves into the new structures and by tribes that resist what has been agreed.

A first major challenge to the parties is posed by the findings of the Abyei Boundary Commission. As stipulated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, its arbitration is definitive and binding. But, as always, that arbitration has created winners and losers. The Presidency has published the Commission's report and is currently studying the findings. Leaders of the Misseriya tribe, while protesting against the outcome of the arbitration, have declared that it is their intention to refrain from attacks on Dinkas and on returning refugees. I call on all to respect the arbitration and to enter into a peaceful dialogue on how to implement the decisions. All parties should be aware that this is the first test case for the sustainability of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Much will depend on the way this is going to be handled, not only in Abyei but also in south Sudan as a whole, the Nuba Mountains, the Blue Nile region and Darfur, as well as in the east.

The United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) also faces tremendous tasks ahead. We are deploying our peace monitoring military capacity steadily, although we are meeting a number of difficulties. Some troop-contributing countries have delayed their contributions, necessitating others who depend on them to do likewise. The total lack of infrastructure in south Sudan, together with heavy rains, creates difficult problems. However, we believe that full deployment will be possible towards the end of October. In the meantime, we are doing our utmost through our good offices to help steer the process towards prudent conflict management. We have decided to give the highest priority to facilitating

voluntary returns of displaced persons and refugees in the upcoming dry season. In that period, we expect about 600,000 of them to return. We will establish way stations and provide a minimum package of assistance.

We need many more resources. Our revised work plan for 2005 amounts to nearly $2 billion. So far, as of mid-2005, only 40 per cent of that figure has been committed. Our programmes are underfunded. I call on all donors to fulfil their pledges and to increase them. The humanitarian situation in south Sudan is very fragile. Not to address it wholeheartedly would betray the expectations of millions and jeopardize the chances of making peace sustainable — until at least six years from now, when people will have to choose, by referendum, either unity or separation.

Creating a perspective for the millions of people on the ground who have suffered for decades is the joint responsibility of political leaders in the Sudan and of the international community. Can we create a similar perspective for the people in Darfur? It seems that the ceasefire is being kept by the parties. The AU force has helped to establish greater stability. They have done an admirable job, a highly professional one, with great dedication.

Militia attacks on villages have decreased. The humanitarian situation in the camps has improved. The monthly number of deaths due to violence is still high, much too high — 100 to 300 — but it is substantially lower than in the period before the adoption of the first Security Council resolution on Darfur, in July last year, when mass attacks had led to mass killings. According to a preliminary study done by the World Health Organization (WHO), the crude mortality rate now is 0.8 death per 10,000 people per day in the whole of Darfur, as against more than 1.5 more than a year ago. The halving of the mortality rate has brought it below the official emergency threshold.

Still, the situation is delicate. Banditry has increased and has become ferocious. Attacks can flare up. Militia have not been disarmed. Arbitrary arrests and the inhumane treatment of prisoners are still taking place. Rape also continues. A new Government policy to help the victims of rape and to investigate crimes of rape has been adopted, after long and intensive discussions with the United Nations, but its implementation is still deficient throughout Darfur.

The Government has commenced a process of reconciliation between tribes. That is laudable, and some results have become manifest. However, it cannot be a substitute either for a political agreement or for official legal action. The Government has finally established a court to deal with crimes against humanity, but so far only a few cases have been brought to court. Here, too, there is a call on the Government: go forward speedily and go higher up. Do not arrest only foot soldiers who have killed and raped; arrest also their commanders and their leaders who instructed them to do so. Only then can impunity be ended. Only then will the present reconciliation efforts result not merely in dissipating a dark past but also in opening a new era in which such crimes cannot be repeated.

All in all, there is room for optimism, but we must be realistic. The situation is fragile — utterly fragile. The wounds inflicted on millions of people during a lengthy period of neglect, exclusion, injustice and bad governance cannot be healed overnight. Democratization and the guaranteeing of human rights require more than an agreement between leaders and fighters. Poverty is extreme, more so than in nearly all other countries of Africa. The battle against poverty, following the fight for peace, will require decades of sustained effort by the Sudanese people and by the international community. Ongoing reconciliation, as well as the management of conflicts between nomads and farmers, will require a great deal of political attention and resources for compensation and development.

The international community started to address the Sudanese problem with a comprehensive strategy a year ago — at last. That strategy consisted of humanitarian, political and military chapters. Some successes have become manifest. A change in strategy is not required. However, an intensification of that strategy, persistence and a commitment to add an economic chapter to it are crucial.

Moreover, we have to look ahead to what will have to be done, if the Darfur peace agreement is signed, to follow up on it. People will have to return to their areas of origin, but they will do so only when they feel secure. That will require a further expansion of the AU force. Planning for such an expansion should commence soon.

On the day of the inauguration of the Government of National Unity, beautiful words were spoken.

President Bashir spoke of a new era. He sketched its contours in language that inspired many people:

> "We give you good tidings of more freedom, democracy and consultation. Our commitment to the people of Darfur is to set right all grievances and hostilities that befell any citizen, from whatever party, on the basis of justice and the rule of law".

That is more than a promise; it is an assurance. Everyone heard him. Everyone in the Sudan — in Khartoum, in El Fasher and in Juba — can watch, see and assess whether this commitment will be turned into reality. Those in Addis, in Nairobi, in Abuja and in New York who have made it possible for the process to result in such commitments and agreements can see to it that this reality will not fade away.

The new second Vice-President, Ali Osman Taha, who had made a place for John Garang as the first Vice-President of the Sudan, referred in his speech to the overwhelming welcome by the people of Khartoum for Garang at his homecoming. It is worth quoting him, too:

> "The people of the Sudan who took to the streets, congratulating, blessing, hailing and calling for more processions such as the ones that filled the towns of the Sudan was the strongest signal, culminating in a historic gathering that brought forth no words — but that, I am sure, was the strongest speech given during those celebrations. And when the people speak during such occasions, then the leaders have to keep silent and proceed to discharge their duties and accomplish their mission — and here, by the grace of God, do we endeavour to do so."

That is quite a commitment. When listening to that speech, many in the audience in Khartoum must have thought: "The people in Darfur have spoken, too. We have heard them in Khartoum, and they have been heard in Addis, in Abuja, in Nairobi and in New York."

Let us proceed to discharge our duties and to accomplish the mission which we undertook a year ago.

The President: I thank Mr. Pronk for his briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussions on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5232

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5232nd meeting

Friday, 22 July 2005, 1.35 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Djeffal
	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Tarrisse da Fontoura
	China	Mr. Cheng Jingye
	Denmark	Mr. Christensen
	France	Mr. Cruau
	Japan	Mr. Kawakami
	Philippines	Mr. Chuasoto
	Romania	Mr. Stamate
	Russian Federation	Mr. Smirnov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Power
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Maundi
	United States of America	Mr. Brencick

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (S/2005/414)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-43561 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 1.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (S/2005/414)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Central African Republic, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Poukré-Kono (Central African Republic) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic, document S/2005/414.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council heard a briefing by the Representative of the Secretary-General, General Lamine Cissé, on the situation in the Central African Republic and the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA). It reiterated its full support for the action of the Representative of the Secretary-General.

"The Security Council is deeply gratified by the successful holding of the presidential and legislative elections, and welcomes the establishment of the newly elected institutions whose stability is necessary to ensure lasting peace in the Central African Republic.

"The Security Council acknowledges the efforts by the Central African defence and security forces to guarantee satisfactory security conditions during the electoral process, and commends the Multinational Force of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (FOMUC), France, the European Union, China and Germany for providing decisive support to them.

"The Security Council appreciates the vital role played in the process by FOMUC to date, and expresses its support for continuing efforts by FOMUC to back the consolidation of the constitutional order, which has thus been re-established, and the rebuilding of the rule of law. In this regard, it welcomes the decision of the States of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community to extend the mandate of FOMUC.

"The Security Council invites the Government of the Central African Republic, and all the political and social forces, to consolidate the national dialogue and to ensure national reconciliation with a view to achieving sustainable development in their country.

"The Security Council calls upon international donors and the international financial institutions to continue to assist the Central African Republic generously. It emphasizes that their support will be indispensable for the country's economic and social recovery and encourages them to formulate, in close consultation with the United Nations system and the Government of the Central African Republic, a concerted development strategy.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to explore, in close consultation with the authorities of the Central

African Republic and the country's development partners, the possibility of setting up a follow-up committee or enlarging the Committee of Foreign Partners to Follow Up on the Electoral Process in order to support the reconstruction efforts initiated by the Central Africans. It invites the Secretary-General to report to it on his consultations through his Representative in the Central African Republic, no later than 31 October 2005.

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the insecurity reigning in the north and the west of the country owing to the presence of armed groups in these regions, and invites relevant States to consult with subregional and regional organizations and with BONUCA on the action required to respond collectively to the threat posed by these armed groups to the stability of the Central African Republic and certain countries of the subregion.

"The Security Council expresses also its deep concern at the continued deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic, in particular in the north of the country. It calls upon the international community to contribute generously to the humanitarian needs of the Central African Republic."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2005/35.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5233

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 July 2005

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5233rd (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 25 July 2005, at 3 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 25 July 2005, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 5233rd meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

"The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a statement by Ms. Lisa Buttenheim, Director of the Asia and Middle East Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and a briefing by Major General Alain Pellegrini, Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"Members of the Council, Ms. Buttenheim, Major General Pellegrini and representatives of participating troop-contributing countries had a constructive exchange of views."

05-43766 (E) 250705

United Nations S/PV.5234

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 July 2005

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5234th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 25 July 2005, at 3.45 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 25 July 2005, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 5234th meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG).

"The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Ms. Heidi Tagliavini, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia.

"Members of the Council, Ms. Tagliavini and representatives of participating troop-contributing countries had a constructive exchange of views."

05-43772 (E) 250705

United Nations S/PV.5235

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5235th meeting

Tuesday, 26 July 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Benmehidi
	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	Benin	Mr. Aho-Glele
	Brazil	Mr. Tarrisse da Fontoura
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj
	United States of America	Mrs. Patterson

Agenda

Children and armed conflict

Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2005/72)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-43884 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Children and armed conflict

Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2005/72)

The President: The Security Council will continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, document S/2005/72. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2005/477, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, Argentina, Benin, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Greece, Japan, Philippines, Romania, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1612 (2005).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5236

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5236th meeting

Tuesday, 26 July 2005, 10.25 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Benmehidi
	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	Benin	Mr. Aho-Glele
	Brazil	Mr. Tarrisse da Fontoura
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj
	United States of America	Mrs. Patterson

Agenda

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Establishment of the list of candidates for ad litem Judges

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-43890 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Establishment of the list of candidates for ad litem Judges

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2005/454, which contains the text of a letter dated 13 July 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2005/478, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, Argentina, Benin, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Greece, Japan, Philippines, Romania, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1613 (2005).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5237

Security Council

Distr.: General
27 July 2005

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5237th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 27 July 2005, at 12.05 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"At its 5237th meeting, held in private on 27 July 2005, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'Letters dated 26 July 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2005/485 and S/2005/489)'.

"Before the agenda was adopted, the representative of the Russian Federation requested that the agenda be put to a vote. The representatives of China and the United Kingdom made statements.

"The President put the request of the Russian Federation to a vote.

"The request received nine votes in favour, five against (Algeria, Benin, China, the Russian Federation and the United Republic of Tanzania) and one abstention (Brazil).

"The agenda was adopted.

"The President, with the consent of the Council, invited the representative of Zimbabwe to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, the President, with the consent of the Council, extended an invitation under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe.

"The members of the Council heard a briefing by Mrs. Tibaijuka.

"The representative of Zimbabwe made a statement.

"Mrs. Tibaijuka responded to questions from members of the Council."

05-44281 (E) 270705

United Nations S/PV.5238

Security Council

Distr.: General
27 July 2005

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5238th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 27 July 2005, at 3 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record.

"At its 5238th meeting, held in private on 27 July 2005, the Security Council considered the item entitled "The situation in Georgia.

"The President, with the consent of the Council, invited the representatives of Georgia and Germany to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, the President, with the consent of the Council, extended an invitation under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure to Ms. Heidi Tagliavini, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Georgia and Head of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia.

"The members of the Council heard a briefing by Ms. Heidi Tagliavini.

"The Special Envoy of the President of Georgia, His Excellency Mr. Irakli Alasania, made a statement."

05-44320 (E) 270705

United Nations S/PV.5239

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5239th meeting

Wednesday, 27 July 2005, 5 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Argentina	Mr. Estremé
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Tarrisse da Fontoura
	China	Mr. Cheng Jingye
	Denmark	Mr. Christensen
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Philippines	Mr. Lacanilao
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj
	United States of America	Mr. Rostow

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

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05-44328 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 5 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Egypt, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council unequivocally condemns the terrorist attacks that took place in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 23 July 2005, and expresses its deepest sympathy and condolences to the victims of these attacks and their families, and to the people and Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, as well as to all other countries whose citizens have been killed or injured in these attacks;

"The Security Council underlines the need to bring the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of this horrendous act to justice, and urges all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and resolution 1373 (2001), to cooperate actively with the Egyptian authorities in this regard;

"The Security Council reaffirms that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

"The Security Council further reaffirms the need to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

"The Security Council reiterates its determination to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2005/36.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5240

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5240th meeting

Wednesday, 27 July 2005, 5.10 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Argentina	Mr. Estremé
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Tarrisse da Fontoura
	China	Mr. Cheng Jingye
	Denmark	Mr. Christensen
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Philippines	Mr. Lacanilao
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj
	United States of America	Mr. Rostow

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-44334 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 5.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

The President: After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council condemns in the strongest possible terms the assassination today, 27 July 2005, of the two Algerian diplomats accredited at the Algerian Embassy to Iraq, Mr. Ali Belaroussi and Mr. Azzedine Belkadi, and expresses its condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government and people of Algeria.

"The Security Council emphasizes that there can be no justification for such terrorist acts and underlines the need to bring to justice its perpetrators.

"The Security Council reaffirms its unwavering support for the Iraqi people in their political transition, as outlined in resolution 1546 (2004). The Security Council also reaffirms Iraq's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity and calls upon the international community to stand by the Iraqi people in their pursuit of peace, stability and democracy."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2005/37.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5241

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5241 st meeting

Friday, 29 July 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Argentina	Mr. Estremé
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Tarrisse da Fontoura
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. Cruau
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. McKenzie Smith
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj
	United States of America	Mr. Brencick

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (S/2005/460*)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-44666 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (S/2005/460*)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, document S/2005/460*.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2005/491*, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Greece, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I should also like to draw the attention of members of the Council to documents S/2005/58, S/2005/105, S/2005/106, S/2005/168, S/2005/242, S/2005/304, S/2005/339, S/2005/369, S/2005/424, S/2005/435 and S/2005/444, which contain letters from Lebanon; and documents S/2005/312, S/2005/352 and S/2005/423, which contain letters from Israel.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote of the draft resolution (S/2005/491*) before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, Argentina, Benin, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Greece, Japan, Philippines, Romania, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania and United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1614 (2005).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.